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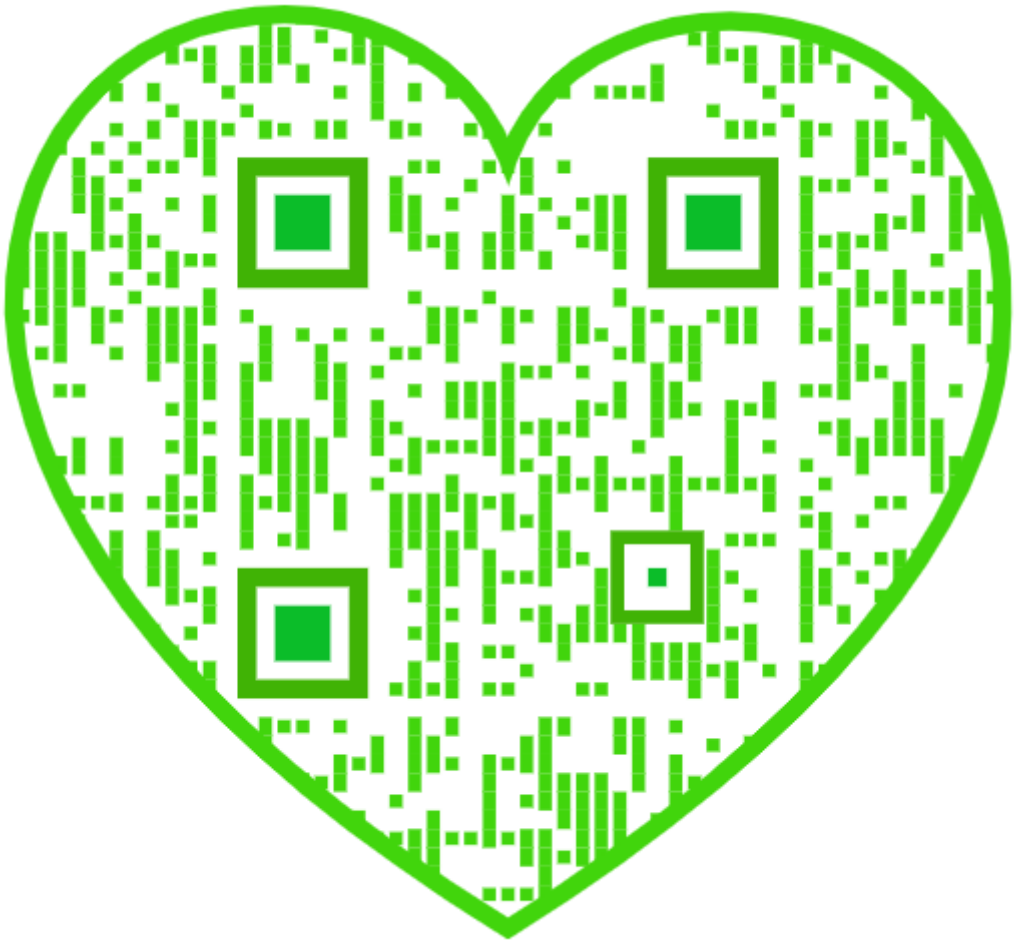

William Henry Wills.

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Sir William C. Priestley. K.B. M.D. LL.D.

AN

ESSAY

ON

PAINTING.

[Price 3s.]

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AN

ESSAY

ON

PAINTING:

IN TWO EPISTLES

TO

MR. *ROMNEY.*

Συγγενειαν τινα προς ποιητικὴν εχειν ἡ τεχνη εὑρισκεται, και κοινη τις αμφοιν ειναι φαντασια,

——— ἁ λεγειν οἱ ποιηται εχυσι ταυτα εν τῳ γραμματι σημαινυσα.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Patet omnibus Ars, nondum eſt occupata, multum ex illâ etiam futuris relictum eſt. SENEC. Epiſt. 33.

BY WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, IN PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXXI.

AN

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TO

MR. ROMNEY, &c.

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EPISTLE

THE FIRST.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

Introduction—The flouriſhing ſtate of Art in this country—Diſadvantages attending the modern Painter of Portraits—Short encomium on this branch of Art, with the account of its origin in the ſtory of the Maid of Corinth—Superiority of Hiſtorical Painting—Some account of the Greeks who excelled in it—Its deſtruction and revival in Italy—Short account of the moſt eminent Italian and Spaniſh Painters—Thoſe of Flanders and France—The corruption of Art among the latter.

TO

TO

MR. GEORGE ROMNEY.

EPISTLE I.

BLEST be the hour, when fav'ring gales reſtore
The travell'd artiſt to his native ſhore!
His mind enlighten'd, and his fancy fraught
With fineſt forms by ancient genius wrought;
Whoſe magic beauty charm'd, with ſpell ſublime,
The ſcythe of Ruin from the hand of Time,
And mov'd the mighty leveller to ſpare
Models of grace ſo exquiſitely fair.
While you, whom Painting thus inſpir'd to roam,
Bring theſe rich ſtores of ripen'd judgment home;
While now, attending my accompliſh'd friend,
Science and Taſte his ſoften'd colours blend;
Let the fond Muſe, tho' with a tranſient view,
The progreſs of her ſiſter art purſue;

Eager in tracing from remoteſt time
The ſteps of Painting through each favour'd clime,
To praiſe her deareſt ſons, whoſe daring aim
Gain'd their bright ſtations on the heights of fame,
And mark the paths by which her partial hand
Conducts her ROMNEY to this radiant band.

Painting, ſweet Nymph! now leaves in lifeleſs trance
Exhauſted Italy, and tinſel France,
And ſees in Britain, with exulting eyes,
Her vot'ries proſper, and her glories riſe.
Yet tho', my friend, thy art is thus careſt,
And with the homage of the public bleſt,
And flouriſhes with growing beauty fair,
The child of Majeſty's adoptive care,
The youthful artiſt ſtill is doom'd to feel
Obſtruction's chilling hand, that damps his zeal:
Th' imperious voice of Vanity and Pride
Bids him from Fancy's region turn aſide,
And quit the magic of her ſcene, to trace
The vacant lines of ſome unmeaning face:
E'en in this work his wiſhes ſtill are croſt,
And all the efforts of his art are loſt;

For when the canvas, with the mirror's truth,
Reflects the perfect form of age or youth,
The fond affections of the partial mind
The eye of judgment with deluſion blind :
Each mother bids him brighter tints employ,
And give new ſpirit to her booby boy ;
Nor can the painter, with his utmoſt art,
Expreſs the image in the lover's heart :
Unconſcious of the change the ſeaſons bring,
Autumnal beauty aſks the roſe of ſpring,
And vain ſelf-love, in every age the ſame,
Will fondly urge ſome viſionary claim.
The luckleſs painter, deſtin'd to ſubmit,
Mourns the loſt likeneſs which he once had hit,
And, doom'd to groundleſs cenſure, bears alone
The grievous load of errors not his own.
Nor is it Pride, or Folly's vain command,
That only fetters his creative hand ;
At Faſhion's nod he copies as they paſs
Each quaint reflection from her crowded glaſs.
The formal coat, with interſecting line,
Mars the free graces of his fair deſign ;

The towering cap he marks with like diſtreſs,
And all the motley maſs of female dreſs.
The hoop extended with enormous ſize,
The corks that like a promontory riſe;
The ſtays of deadly ſteel, in whoſe embrace
The tyrant Faſhion tortures injur'd Grace.
But Art, deſpairing over ſhapes like theſe
To caſt an air of elegance and eaſe,
Invokes kind Fancy's aid—ſhe comes to ſpread
Her magic ſpells—the Gothic forms are fled;
And ſee, to crown the painter's juſt deſire,
Her free poſitions, and her light attire!
Th' ambitious artiſt wiſhes to purſue
This brilliant plan with more extenſive view,
And with adopted character to give
A laſting charm to make the portrait live;
All points of art by one nice effort gain,
Delight the learned, and content the vain;
Make hiſtory to life new value lend *,
And in the comprehenſive picture blend
The ancient hero with the living friend.

* Ver. 77. See NOTE I.

Moſt fair device! " but, ah! what foes to ſenſe,
What broods of motley monſters riſe from hence!"
The ſtrange pretenſions of each age and ſex
Theſe plans of fancy and of taſte perplex;
For male and female, to themſelves unknown,
Demand a character unlike their own,
Till oft the painter to this quaint diſtreſs
Prefers the awkward ſhapes of common dreſs.
Sweet girls, of mild and penſive ſoftneſs, chooſe
The ſportive emblems of the comic Muſe;
And ſprightly damſels are inclin'd to borrow
The garb of penitence, and tears of ſorrow:
While awkward pride, tho' ſafe from war's alarms,
Round his plump body buckles ancient arms,
And, from an honeſt juſtice of the peace,
Starts up at once a demi-god of Greece;
Too firm of heart by ridicule to fail,
The finiſh'd hero crowns his country hall,
Ordain'd to fill, if fire his glory ſpare,
The lumber-garret of his wiſer heir.

Not leſs abſurd to flatter NERO's eyes *
Aroſe the portrait of coloſſal ſize:
Twice fifty feet th' enormous ſheet was ſpread,
To lift o'er gazing ſlaves the monſter's head,
When impious Folly ſway'd Oppreſſion's rod,
And ſervile Rome ador'd the mimic God.

Think not, my friend, with ſupercilious air,
I rank the portrait as beneath thy care.
Bleſt be the pencil! which from death can ſave †
The ſemblance of the virtuous, wiſe, and brave;
That youth and emulation ſtill may gaze,
On thoſe inſpiring forms of ancient days,
And, from the force of bright example bold,
Rival their worth, "and be what they behold."
Bleſt be the pencil! whoſe conſoling pow'r,
Soothing ſoft Friendſhip in her penſive hour,
Diſpels the cloud, with melancholy fraught,
That abſence throws upon her tender thought.
Bleſt be the pencil! whoſe enchantment gives
To wounded Love the food on which he lives.

* Ver. 100. See NOTE II.

† Ver. 108. See NOTE III.

Rich in this gift, tho' cruel ocean bear
The youth to exile from his faithful fair,
He in fond dreams hangs o'er her glowing cheek,
Still owns her preſent, and ſtill hears her ſpeak:
Oh! LOVE, it was thy glory to impart
Its infant being to this magic art!
Inſpir'd by thee, the ſoft Corinthian maid, *
Her graceful lover's ſleeping form portray'd:
Her boding heart his near departure knew,
Yet long'd to keep his image in her view:
Pleas'd ſhe beheld the ſteady ſhadow fall,
By the clear lamp upon the even wall:
The line ſhe trac'd with fond preciſion true,
And, drawing, doated on the form ſhe drew:
Nor, as ſhe glow'd with no forbidden fire,
Conceal'd the ſimple picture from her ſire,
His kindred fancy, ſtill to nature juſt,
Copied her line, and form'd the mimic buſt.
Thus from thy power, inſpiring LOVE, we trace
The modell'd image, and the pencil'd face!

* Ver. 126. See NOTE IV.

We pity Genius, when by intereſt led,
His toils but reach the ſemblance of a head;
Yet are thoſe cenſures too ſevere and vain,
That ſcorn the Portrait as the Painter's bane.
Tho' up the mountain winds the arduous road,
That leads to pure Perfection's bright abode,
In humbler walks ſome tempting laurels grow,
Some flowers are gather'd in the vale below:
Youth on the plain collects increaſing force,
To climb the ſteep in his meridian courſe.
While Nature ſees her living models ſhare
The riſing artiſt's unremitting care,
She on his mind her every charm imprints,
Her eaſy poſtures, and her perfect tints,
Till his quick pencil, in maturer hour,
Becomes her rival in creative power.
Yet in theſe paths diſdain a long delay,
While eager Genius points a nobler way:
For ſee! expanding to thy raptur'd gaze,
The epic field a brighter ſcene diſplays!
Here ſtands the temple, where, to merit true,
Fame gives her laurel to the favour'd few:

Whoſe minds, illumin'd with cœleſtial fire,
Direct the pencil, or awake the lyre;
Who trace the ſprings of nature to their ſource,
And by her guidance, with reſiſtleſs force,
The tides of terror and of tranſport roll,
Thro' every channel of the human ſoul!

How few, my friend, tho' millions boaſt the aim,
Leave in this temple an unclouded name!
Vain the attempt, in every age and clime,
Without the ſlow conductors toil and time;
Without that ſecret, ſoul-impelling power,
Infus'd by genius in the natal hour;
And vain with theſe, if bright occaſion's ray
Fail to illuminate the doubtful way.

The elders of thy art, ordain'd to ſtand
In the firſt circle of this honour'd band,
(Whoſe pencil, ſtriving for the nobleſt praiſe,
The heart to ſoften and the mind to raiſe,
Gave life and manners to the finiſh'd piece)
Theſe ſons of glory were the ſons of GREECE!
Hail! throne of genius, hail! what mighty hand
Form'd the bright offspring of this famous land?

Firſt in the annals of the world they ſhine:
Such gifts, O LIBERTY, are only thine;
Thy vital fires thro' kindling ſpirits run,
Thou ſoul of life, thou intellectual ſun;
Thy rays call forth, profuſe and unconfin'd,
The richeſt produce of the human mind.
Firſt taught by thee, the Grecian pencil wrought
The forceful leſſons of exalted thought,
And generouſly gave, at glory's call,
The patriot picture to the public hall.
'Twas then PANÆUS drew, with freedom's train,*
The chief of Marathon's immortal plain.
In glorious triumph o'er the mighty hoſt
That Perſia pour'd in torrents on their coaſt.
There POLYGNOTUS, ſcorning ſervile hire, †
Diſplay'd the embattled ſcene from HOMER's lyre.
His country view'd the gift with fond regard,
And rank'd the painter with their nobleſt bard.
Thy tragic pencil, ARISTIDES, caught ‡
Each varied feeling, and each tender thought,

* Ver. 194. See NOTE V.
† Ver. 198. See NOTE VI.
‡ Ver. 202. See NOTE VII.

While moral virtue ſanctified thy art,
And paſſion gave it empire o'er the heart.
  Correct Parrhaſius firſt to rich deſign *
Gave nice proportion, and the melting line,
Whoſe ſoft extremes from obſervation fly,
And with ideal diſtance cheat the eye.
  The gay, the warm, licentious ZEUXIS drew, †
Voluptuous Beauty in her richeſt hue:
Bade in one form her ſcatter'd rays unite,
And charm'd the view with their collected light.
  But Grace conſign'd, while her fair works he plann'd,
Her ſofteſt pencil to APELLES' hand:
Yet oft to gain ſublimer heights he ſtrove, ‡
Such ſtrong expreſſion mark'd his mimic JOVE,
Inimitably great he ſeem'd to tower,
And paſs the limits of the pencil's power.
  Ye ſons of art, tho' on the gulph of years,
No floating relic of your toil appears,
Yet glory ſhews, in every cultur'd clime,
Your names ſtill radiant thro' the clouds of time.

* Ver. 206. See NOTE VIII.
† Ver. 210. See NOTE IX.
‡ Ver. 216. See NOTE X.

Thy

Thy pride, O ROME, inclin'd thee to abhor
Each work that call'd thee from thy ſphere of war:
By Freedom train'd, and favour'd by the Nine,
The powers of eloquence and verſe were thine,
While chilling damps upon the pencil hung,*
Where TULLY thunder'd, and where VIRGIL ſung,
Yet Grecian artiſts had the ſplendid fate,
To triumph o'er the Romans' ſcornful hate.
Their matchleſs works Profuſion toil'd to buy,
Their wonders glitter'd in the public eye,
Till ROME's terrific pomp, and letter'd pride,
Were ſunk in Deſolation's whelming tide.
Oh! lovely Painting! long thy cheering light
Was loſt and buried in barbaric night;
The furious rage of Anarchy effac'd
Each hallow'd character thy hand had trac'd,
And Ign'rance, mutt'ring in her monkiſh cell,
Bound thy free ſoul in her lethargic ſpell.
At length from this long trance thy ſpirit roſe,
In that ſweet vale where ſilver Arno flows;

* Ver. 228. See NOTE XI.

There ſtudious VINCI treaſur'd every rule,*
To form the baſis of a riſing ſchool:
Like early HESIOD, 'twas his fate to ſhine,
The herald of a maſter more divine.

Inflam'd by Genius with ſublimeſt rage,
By toil unwearied, and unchill'd by age,
In the fine phrenzy of exalted thought
Gigantic ANGELO his wonders wrought; †
And high, by native ſtrength of ſpirit rais'd,
The mighty HOMER of the pencil blaz'd.

Taſte, Fancy, Judgment, all on RAPHAEL ſmil'd, ‡
Of Grandeur and of Grace the darling child:
Truth, paſſion, character, his conſtant aim,
Both in the human and the heavenly frame,
Th' enchanting painter rules the willing heart,
And ſhines the finiſh'd VIRGIL of his art.

The daring JULIO, tho' by RAPHAEL train'd, §
Reach'd not the ſummit, where his maſter reign'd;

* Ver. 244. See NOTE XII.
† Ver. 251. See NOTE XIII.
‡ Ver. 254. See NOTE XIV.
§ Ver. 260. See NOTE XV.

Yet

Yet to no common heights of epic fame,
True Genius guided his adventurous aim.
Thus STATIUS, fraught with emulous regard,
Caught not the ſpirit of the Mantuan bard:
Tho' rival ardour his ambition fir'd,
And kindred talents his bold verſe inſpir'd.
More richly warm, the glowing TITIAN knew*
To blend with Nature's truth the living hue:
O! had ſublime deſign his colours crown'd!
Then had the world a finiſh'd painter found:
With powers to ſeize the higheſt branch of art,
He fix'd too fondly on an humbler part;
Yet this low object of his partial care
Grew from his toil ſo exquiſitely fair,
That dazzled judgment, with ſuſpended voice,
Fears to condemn the error of his choice.
Thus pleaſed a flowery valley to explore
Whence never Poet cull'd a wreath before, †
LUCRETIUS choſe the epic crown to loſe
For the bright chaplets of an humbler muſe.

* Ver. 268. See NOTE XVI.

† Unde prius nulli velarunt Tempora Muſæ. LUCRETIUS, Lib. iv. Ver. 5.

Soft

Soft as CATULLUS, ſweet CORREGIO play'd *
With all the magic charms of light and ſhade.
Tho' PARMA claim it for her rival ſon, †
The praiſe of ſweeteſt grace thy pencil won:
Unhappy genius! tho' of ſkill divine,
Unjuſt neglect, and penury were thine.
Lamenting o'er thy labours unrepaid,
Afflicted Art oppreſt with wrongs decay'd,
Till with pure judgment the CARACCI came, ‡
And raiſing her weak powers and ſinking frame,
Reclaim'd the pencil of miſguided youth,
From Affectation's glare to tints of modeſt Truth.
They form'd the Pencil, to whoſe infant fame
Young ZAMPIERI ow'd his nobler name: §
Profoundly ſkill'd his figures to diſpoſe,
The learned LANFRANC in their ſchool aroſe, ‖
And, trained to glory, by their forming care,
The tender GUIDO caught his graceful air. ¶

* Ver. 282. See NOTE XVII.
† Ver. 284. See NOTE XVIII.
‡ Ver. 290. See NOTE XIX.
§ Ver. 295. See NOTE XX.
‖ Ver. 297. See NOTE XXI.
¶ Ver. 299. See NOTE XXII.

Nor ſhall ye fail your well-earn'd praiſe to gain,
Ye! who adorn'd with art your native SPAIN!
The unfrequented ſhore, that gave you birth,
Tempts not the faithful Muſe to hide your worth:
Juſt to all regions, let her voice proclaim
TITIAN's mute ſcholar, rival of his fame. *
The power, that Nature to his lips denied,
Indulgent Art, with fonder care, ſupplied:
The cruel bar his happy genius broke;
Tho' dumb the painter, all his pictures ſpoke.
And thou, VELASQUEZ, ſhare the honour due †
To forceful tints, that faſcinate the view!
Thy bold illuſive talents ſoar'd ſo high,
They mock'd, with mimic life, the cheated eye.
Thou liberal artiſt! 'twas thy praiſe to guide
Thy happy ſcholar with parental pride;
Thy care the ſoft, the rich MURILLO form'd; ‡
And as thy precept taught, thy friendſhip warm'd.

* Ver. 305. See NOTE XXIII.
† Ver. 310. See NOTE XXIV.
‡ Ver. 316. See NOTE XXV.

Yet

Yet other names, and not a ſcanty band!
Have added luſtre to th' IBERIAN land;
But, generous ITALY, thy genial earth
Superior numbers bore of ſplendid worth!
And rais'd amidſt them, in thy golden days,
No mean hiſtorian to record their praiſe. *

On Thee, whom Art, thy patroneſs and pride,
Taught both the pencil and the pen to guide;
Whoſe generous zeal and modeſt truth have known
To blazon others' ſkill, not boaſt thy own;
On thee, VASARI, let my verſe beſtow
That juſt applauſe, ſo freely ſeen to flow
From thy ingenuous heart and liberal hand,
To each great artiſt of thy native land!
Tho' many ſhine in thy elaborate page,
And more have riſen ſince thy diſtant age,
Their various talents, and their different fame,
The Muſe, unſkilful, muſt decline to name,
Leaſt in the nice attempt her judgment fail,
To poiſe their merits in Preciſion's ſcale.

* Ver. 323. See NOTE XXVI.

E'en public Taſte, by no determin'd rule,
Has claſs'd the merit of each nobler ſchool:
To Rome and Florence, in Expreſſion ſtrong,
The higheſt honours of Deſign belong;
On her pure Style ſee mild Bologna claim *
Her faireſt right to ſecondary fame;
Tho' prouder Venice would uſurp that praiſe,
Upon the ſplendid force of Titian's golden rays. †
But ill they know the value of their art,
Who, flattering the eye, neglect the heart.
Tho' matchleſs tints a laſting name ſecure,
Tho' ſtrong the magic of the clear-obſcure,
Theſe muſt ſubmit, as a dependant part,
To pure Deſign, the very ſoul of Art;
Or Fame, miſguided, muſt invert her courſe,
And Raphael's Grace muſt yield to Rembrandt's Force; ‡
Fancy's bold thought to Labour's patient touch,
And Rome's exalted genius to the Dutch.

* Ver. 342. See NOTE XXVII.
† Ver. 345. See NOTE XXVIII.
‡ Ver. 353. See NOTE XXIX.

Yet,

Yet, HOLLAND, thy unwearied labours raiſe *
A perfect title to peculiar praiſe:
Thy hum'rous pencil ſhuns the epic field,
The blazing falchion, and the ſanguine ſhield;
But hap'ly marks the group of rural Mirth,
In ſocial circle round the chearful hearth,
And ruſtic Joy, from buſy cares releas'd,
To the gay gambols of the village feaſt:
While Nature ſmiles her very faults to view,
Trac'd with a ſkill ſo exquiſitely true.
Theſe faults, O REMBRANDT, 'twas thy praiſe to hide!
New pow'rs of ART thy fertile mind ſupplied;
With dazzling force thy gorgeous colouring glows,
And o'er each ſcene an air of grandeur throws:
The meaneſt Figures dignity aſſume,
From thy contraſted light, and magic gloom.
Theſe ſtrong illuſions are ſupremely thine,
And laugh at Imitation's vague deſign:
So near to blemiſhes thy beauties run,
Thoſe who affect thy ſplendor are undone:

* Ver. 356. See NOTE XXX.

While

While thy raſh rivals, looſe and incorrect,
Miſcall their ſhadowy want of truth *Effect*,
And into paths of affectation ſtart:
Neglect of Nature is the bane of Art.
Proud of the praiſe by RUBENS' pencil won, *
Let FLANDERS boaſt her bold inventive ſon!
Whoſe glowing hues magnificently ſhine
With warmth congenial to his rich deſign:
And him, her ſecond pride, whoſe milder care,
From living Beauty caught its lovelieſt air!
Who truth of character with grace combin'd,
And in the ſpeaking feature mark'd the mind,
Her ſoft VANDYKE, while graceful portraits pleaſe, †
Shall reign the model of unrivall'd eaſe.
Painting ſhall tell, with many a grateful thought,
From FLANDERS firſt the ſecret pow'r ſhe caught, ‡
To grace and guard the offspring of her toil,
With all the virtues of enduring oil;

* Ver. 380. See NOTE XXXI.
† Ver. 388. See NOTE XXXII.
‡ Ver. 391. See NOTE XXXIII.

Tho' charm'd by ITALY's alluring views,
(Where ſumptuous LEO courted every Muſe, *
And lovely Science grew the public care)
She fixt the glories of her empire there;
There in her zenith ſoon ſhe ceas'd to ſhine,
And dated, paſſing her meridian line,
From the CARACCI's death her period of decline.
Yet in her gloomy and diſgraceful hour
Of faded beauty, and enfeebled power,
With talents flowing in free Nature's courſe,
With juſt exertion of unborrow'd force,
Untrodden paths of art SALVATOR tried, †
And daring Fancy was his favourite guide.
O'er his wild rocks, at her command, he throws
A ſavage grandeur, and ſublime repoſe;
Or gives th' hiſtoric ſcene a charm as ſtrong
As the terrific gloom of DANTE's ſong.
His bold ideas, unrefin'd by taſte,
Expreſs'd with vigour, tho' conceiv'd in haſte,

* Ver. 395. See NOTE XXXIV.
† Ver. 405. See NOTE XXXV.

Before

Before ſlow judgment their defects can find,
With awful pleaſure fill the paſſive mind.
Nor could one art, with various beauty fraught,
Engroſs the ardor of his active thought:
His pencil pauſing, with ſatiric fire
He ſtruck the chords of the congenial lyre;
By generous verſe attempting to reclaim
The meaner artiſt from each abject aim.
But vain his ſatire! his example vain!
Degraded Painting ſinks, with many a ſtain:
Her clouded beams, from ITALY withdrawn,
On colder FRANCE with tranſient luſtre dawn.
There, in the arms of ROMAN Science nurs'd,
In every work of ancient genius vers'd,
The ſage POUSSIN, with pureſt fancy fraught,*
Portray'd the claſſic ſcene, as Learning taught:
But Nature, jealous of her ſacred right,
And piqu'd that his idolatry ſhould ſlight
Her glowing graces, and her living air,
To worſhip marble with a fonder care,

* Ver. 427. See NOTE XXXVI.

Denied his pencil, in its mimic ſtrife,
The bloom of beauty, and the warmth of life.
Then roſe LE BRUN, his ſcholar, and his friend, *
More juſtly ſkill'd the vivid tints to blend;
Tho' with exalted ſpirit he preſent
The generous victor in the ſuppliant tent,
Too oft the genius of his gaudy clime
Miſled his pencil from the pure ſublime.
Thy dawn, LE SUEUR, announc'd a happier taſte, †
With fancy glowing, and with judgment chaſte:
But Art, who gloried in thy riſing bloom,
Shed fruitleſs tears upon thy early tomb.
Theſe lights withdrawn, Confuſion and Miſrule
Seize the vain pencil of the Gallic ſchool:
Tho' FRESNOY teaches, in Horatian ſong, ‡
The laws and limits that to Art belong;
In vain he ſtrives, with Attic judgment chaſte,
To cruſh the monſters of corrupted taſte:

* Ver. 435. See NOTE XXXVII.
† Ver. 441. See NOTE XXXVIII.
‡ Ver. 447. See NOTE XXXIX.

With ineffectual fire the poet ſings,
Prolific ſtill the wounded Hydra ſprings:
Gods roll'd on gods encumber every hall,
And ſaints, convulſive, o'er the chapel ſprawl.
Bombaſt is Grandeur, Affectation Grace,
Beauty's ſoft ſmile is turn'd to pert grimace;
Loaded with dreſs, ſupremely fine advance
Old HOMER's heroes, with the airs of FRANCE.
Indignant Art diſclaim'd the motley crew,
Reſign'd their empire, and to BRITAIN flew.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE

THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

The riſe of Painting in England, and the reaſons for its happening ſo late—The rapidity of its improvement—A ſlight ſketch of the moſt eminent living Artiſts in England. The author's wiſh to ſee his friend among the firſt of that number—His reaſons for hoping it. The reputation of a Painter in ſome degree owing to a happy choice of ſubjects—A few recommended from national events—and from Milton and Shakeſpeare — Concluſion — Author's wiſhes for his friend's ſucceſs.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE II.

INGENUOUS ROMNEY, whom thy merits raiſe
To the pure ſummits of unclouded praiſe;
Whom Art has choſen, with ſucceſsful hand,
To ſpread her empire o'er this honour'd land;
Thy Progreſs Friendſhip with delight ſurveys,
And this pure Homage to thy Goddeſs pays.
Hail! heavenly Viſitant! whoſe cheering powers
E'en to the happy give ſtill happier Hours!
O! next to Freedom, and the Muſe, deſign'd
To raiſe, ennoble, and adorn mankind!
At length we view thee in this favor'd Iſle,
That greets thy Preſence, and deſerves thy Smile:
This favor'd Iſle, in native Freedom bold,
And rich in Spirit as thy Greeks of old.
Tho' foreign Theoriſts, with Syſtem blind, *
Preſcribe falſe limits to the Britiſh mind,

* Ver. 15. See NOTE XL.

And,

And, warp'd by Vanity, preſume to hold,
Our northern Genius dark, confin'd, and cold:
Painting, ſweet Nymph, unconſcious of their chain,
In this fair Iſland forms her new Domain,
And freely gives to BRITAIN's eager view
Thoſe charms which once her fav'rite ATHENS knew.
'Tis true, when Painting, on ITALIA's ſhore,
Diſplay'd thoſe Graces, which all Realms adore,
No kindred forms of Engliſh growth appear;
Age after age the hapleſs Pencil here
Dropt unſucceſsful from the Native's hand,
And fail'd to decorate this darker Land.
But freely let impartial Hiſtory ſay,
Why Art on BRITAIN ſhone with later ray.
When on this Iſle, the Gothic clouds withdrawn,
The diſtant light of Painting ſeem'd to dawn,
Fierce HARRY reign'd, who, ſoon with pleaſure cloy'd,*
Now lov'd, now ſcorn'd, now worſhip'd, now deſtroy'd.
Thee as his Wives, enchanting Art! he priz'd,
Now ſought to crown thee, now thy death devis'd:

* Ver. 33. See NOTE XLI.

Now

Now ſtrove to fix, with liberal ſupport,
Thy darling RAPHAEL in his ſumptuous Court;
Now o'er the hallow'd ſhrines, thy hand had grac'd,
" Cried havock, and let ſlip the Dogs of Waſte."
When timid Art ſaw ruin his delight,
She fled in terror from the Tyrant's ſight.

The Virgin Queen, whom dazzled eyes admire,
The ſubtle Child of this imperious Sire,
Untaught the moral force of Art to feel, *
Proſcrib'd it as the ſlave of bigot Zeal,
Or doom'd it, throwing nobler works aſide,
To drudge in flatt'ring her fantaſtic Pride:
And hence the Epic pencil in the ſhade
Of blank neglect, and cold obſtruction laid,
E'en while the Fairy-ſprite, and Muſe of fire,
Hung high in Glory's hall the Engliſh lyre.

JAMES, both for Empire and for Arts unfit,
(His ſenſe a quibble, and a pun his wit)
Whatever works he patroniz'd debas'd,
But haply left the Pencil undiſgrac'd.

* Ver. 45. See NOTE XLII.

With fairer mind aroſe his nobler Son,
Seduc'd by Paraſites, by Prieſts undone:
Unhappy CHARLES! oh! had thy feeling heart
But honour'd Freedom as it valued Art!
To merit juſt, thy bounty flow'd alike
On bolder RUBENS, and the ſoft VANDYKE:
To this ennobled realm thy judgment brought
The ſacred miracles that RAPHAEL wrought.
But regal Pride, with vain Ambition blind,
Cut off the promiſe of thy cultur'd mind.
By wounded Liberty's convulſive hand
Unbound, fierce Anarchy uſurps the Land;
While trembling Art to foreign regions flies,
To ſeek a refuge in ſerener ſkies.
Theſe ſtorms ſubſiding, ſee her once again,
Returning in the ſecond CHARLES's train!
She comes to copy, in licentious ſport,
The Minions of a looſe luxurious Court;
From whence the modeſt Graces turn their eyes,
Where Genius ſees, and o'er the proſpect ſighs,
LELY's ſoft tints, and DRYDEN's nobler Lyre,
Made the mean Slaves of diſſolute Deſire.

Once more, alarm'd by War's terrific roar,
The ſweet Enchantreſs quits the troubled ſhore;
While ſacred Freedom, darting in diſdain
Her vengeful Thunder on th' apoſtate Train,
And, pleas'd the gloomy Tyrant to diſown,
Gives to NASSAU the abdicated Throne.
The peaceful Prince may riſing Art defend,
And Art ſhall crown her Patron and her Friend.
In tumults, from the cradle to the grave,
'Tis thine, O! WILLIAM, ſinking realms to ſave.
To thee no leiſure mightier cares allow,
To bind the laurel on the Artiſt's brow:
'Tis thine to fix, with tutelary hand,
The Baſe of Freedom, on which Art muſt ſtand.
Yet to thy Palace KNELLER's ſkill ſupplied *
Its richeſt ornament in Beauty's pride.
Unhappy KNELLER! covetous though vain;
Thee Glory yielded to ſeducing Gain:
While partial Taſte from modeſt RILEY turn'd, †
By diffidence depriv'd of praiſe well earn'd.

* Ver. 93. See NOTE XLIII.
† Ver. 97. See NOTE XLIV.

Tho' in ſucceeding years the Muſes taught,
"How ANN commanded, and how MARLBRO' fought;"
And THORNHILL's blaze of Allegory gilt*
The piles, that WREN's ſuperior genius built;
Contending Factions, in her cloſing reign,
Like winds impriſon'd, ſhook fair Freedom's Fane.
Painting, ſoft timid Nymph, ſtill choſe to roam,
And fear'd to ſettle in this ſhaking Dome.

At length, the fury of each ſtorm o'erblown,
That threaten'd BRUNSWICK's race on BRITAIN's throne,
Rebellion vanquiſh'd on her native ſhore,
Her clans extinguiſh'd, and her chiefs no more:
The youthful Noble, on a princely Plan,†
Encourag'd infant Art, and firſt began
Before the ſtudious eye of Youth to place
The ancient Models of ideal Grace.

When BRITAIN triumph'd, thro' her wide domain,
O'er France, ſupported by imperious SPAIN,
And, ſated with her Laurels' large increaſe,
Began to cultivate the plants of Peace;

* Ver. 101. See NOTE XLV.
† Ver. 111. See NOTE XLVI.

Fixt

Fixt by kind Majeſty's protecting hand,
Painting, no more an alien in our land,
Firſt ſmil'd to ſee, on this propitious ground,
Her Temples open'd, and her altars crown'd:
And Grace, the firſt attendant of her train,
She, whom APELLES wooed, nor wooed in vain,
To REYNOLDS gives her undulating line,
And Judgment doats upon his chaſte deſign.
Tho' Envy whiſpers in the ear of Spleen,
What thoughts are borrow'd in his perfect ſcene,
With glee ſhe marks them on her canker'd ſcroll,
Malicious Fiend! 'twas thus that VIRGIL ſtole,
To the bright Image gave a brighter Gloſs,
Or turn'd to pureſt Gold the foreign Droſs.
Excelling Artiſt! long delight the eye!
Teach but thy tranſient tints no more to fly, *
BRITAIN ſhall then her own APELLES ſee,
And all the Grecian ſhall revive in thee.
Thy manly ſpirit glories to impart
The leading Principles of lib'ral Art; †

* Ver. 134. See NOTE XLVII.
† Ver. 138. See NOTE XLVIII.

To youthful Genius points what courſe to run,
What Lights to follow, and what Rocks to ſhun :
So ORPHEUS taught, by Learning's heavenly ſway,
To daring Argonauts their doubtful way,
And mark'd, to guide them in their bold Career,
Th' unerring Glories of the ſtarry Sphere.
Thy Hand enforces what thy Precept taught,
And gives new leſſons of exalted thought ;
Thy nervous Pencil on the canvaſs throws
The tragic ſtory of ſublimeſt woes :
The wretched Sons, whom Grief and Famine tear,
The Parent petrified with blank Deſpair,
Thy UGOLINO gives the heart to thrill, *
With Pity's tender throbs, and Horror's icy chill.
The offspring now of many a rival hand,
Sublimity and Grace adorn the Land ;
Tho' but ſome few years paſt, this barren coaſt
Scarce one fair grain of native Art could boaſt.
Of various form, where'er we turn our eyes,
With ſtrong and rapid growth new wonders riſe,

* Ver. 151. See NOTE XLIX.

Like

Like ſeeds that Mariners, with generous toil,
Have wiſely carried to ſome kindred ſoil,
Which, ſhooting quick and vig'rous in their birth,
Speak the fond bounty of the virgin Earth:
The Land o'erjoy'd a fairer fruit to ſee
Adopts, with glad ſurprize, the alien Tree.
  Now Art exults, with annual Triumphs gay, *
And BRITAIN glories in her rich diſplay;
Merit, who unaſſiſted, and unknown,
Late o'er his unſeen labours ſigh'd alone,
Sees honour now his happier toils attend,
And in the generous Public finds a friend.
  O lovely Painting, to whoſe charms I bow,
" And breathe my willing verſe with ſuppliant vow,"
Forgive me, if by undiſcerning Praiſe,
Or groundleſs Cenſure, which falſe Judgment ſways,
My failing line with faint reſemblance wrong
Thy Sons, the ſubject of no envious ſong!
  Supremely ſkill'd the varied group to place,
And range the crowded ſcene with eaſy grace;

* Ver. 165. See NOTE L.

To

To finiſh parts, yet not impair the whole,
But on th' impaſſion'd action fix the ſoul;
Thro' wandering throngs the patriot Chief to guide,
The ſhame of CARTHAGE, as of ROME the pride;
Or, while the bleeding Victor yields his breath,
Give the bright leſſon of heroic Death.
Such are thy Merits, WEST: by Virtue's hand
Built on the human heart thy praiſe ſhall ſtand,
While dear to Glory, in her guardian Fane,
The names of REGULUS and WOLFE remain.
With kindred power a rival hand ſucceeds,
For whoſe juſt fame expiring CHATHAM pleads;
Like CHATHAM's language, luminous and bold,
Thy colours, COPLEY, the dread ſcene unfold,
Where that prime Spirit, by whoſe guidance hurl'd,
BRITAIN's avenging thunder aw'd the world,
In patriot cares employ'd his parting breath,
Struck in his field of civic fame by Death;
And Freedom, happy in the tribute paid
By Art and Genius to ſo dear a Shade,
Shall own, the meaſure of thy praiſe to fill,
The aweful ſubject equall'd by thy ſkill.

To DANCE's pencil, in Preciſion ſtrong,
Tranſcendent Force, and Truth of Line belong.
Not GARRICK's ſelf, to SHAKESPEARE's ſpirit true,
Diſplay'd that ſpirit clearer to our view,
Than DANCE expreſſes, in its fierceſt flame,
The Poet's Genius in the Actor's Frame.
From GARRICK's features, with diſtraction fraught,
He copies every trace of troubled thought;
And paints, while back the waves of Battle roll,
The Storm of ſanguinary RICHARD's ſoul.
The rapid MORTIMER, of Spirit wild,
Imagination's dear and daring Child,
Marks the fierce Ruffian, in the Dungeon's gloom,
Stung with remorſe, and ſhudd'ring at his doom.
Yet ſtill to nobler heights his Genius ſprings,
And paints a leſſon to tyrannic Kings:
In his bright colours ſee the field appear
To Freedom ſacred, and to Glory dear,
Where JOHN, proud Monarch, baffled on his throne,
Hears the brave Chief his lawleſs pow'r diſown,
And, for an injur'd Nation, nobly claim
The glorious CHARTER of immortal Fame!

But

But ſee far off the modeſt WRIGHT retire!
Alone he rules his Element of Fire:
Like Meteors darting through the gloom of Night,
His ſparkles flaſh upon the dazzled ſight;
Our eyes with momentary anguiſh ſmart,
And Nature trembles at the power of Art.
May thy bold colours, claiming endleſs praiſe,
For ages ſhine with undiminiſh'd blaze,
And when the fierce VESUVIO burns no more,
May his red deluge down thy canvaſs pour!

Art with no common gifts her GAINSB'ROUGH grac'd,
Two different Pencils in his hand ſhe plac'd;
This ſhall command, ſhe ſaid, with certain aim,
A perfect Semblance of the human Frame;
This, lightly ſporting on the village-green,
Paint the wild beauties of the rural Scene.

In Storms ſublime the daring WILSON ſoars,
And on the blaſted Oak his mimic Lightning pours:
APOLLO triumphs in his flaming ſkies,
And claſſic Beauties in his ſcenes ariſe.

Thy Graces, HUMPHREYS, and thy Colours clear,
From Miniature's ſmall circle diſappear:

May their diſtinguiſh'd Merit ſtill prevail,
And ſhine with luſtre on the larger Scale.

Let candid Juſtice our attention lead,
To the ſoft Crayon of the graceful READ:
Nor, GARD'NER, ſhall the Muſe, in haſte, forget
Thy Taſte and Eaſe; tho' with a fond Regret
She pays, while here the Crayon's pow'r ſhe notes,
A Sigh of Homage to the Shade of COATES.
Nor, if her favour'd hand may hope to ſhed
The flowers of glory o'er the ſkillful dead,
Thy Talents, HOGARTH! will ſhe leave unſung; *
Charm of all eyes, and Theme of every tongue!
A ſeparate province 'twas thy praiſe to rule;
Self-form'd thy Pencil! yet thy works a School,
Where ſtrongly painted, in gradations nice,
The Pomp of Folly, and the Shame of Vice,
Reach'd thro' the laughing Eye the mended Mind,
And moral Humour ſportive Art refin'd.
While fleeting Manners, as minutely ſhewn
As the clear proſpect on the mirror thrown;

* Ver. 255. See NOTE LI.

While Truth of Character, exactly hit,
And dreſt in all the dyes of comic wit;
While theſe, in FIELDING's page, delight ſupply,
So long thy Pencil with his Pen ſhall vie.
Science with grief beheld thy drooping age
Fall the ſad victim of a Poet's rage:
But Wit's vindictive ſpleen, that mocks controul,
Nature's high tax on luxury of ſoul!
This, both in Bards and Painters, Fame forgives;
Their Frailty's buried, but their Genius lives.
Still many a Painter, not of humble Name,
Appears the tribute of applauſe to claim;
Some alien Artiſts, more of Engliſh Race,
With fair ANGELICA our foreign Grace,
Who paints, with Energy and Softneſs join'd,
The fond Emotions of the female Mind;
And CIPRIANI, whom the Loves ſurround,
And ſportive Nymphs in Beauty's Ceſtus bound:
For him thoſe Nymphs their every Charm diſplay,
For him coy VENUS throws her veil away;
And ZAFFANI, whoſe faithful colours give
The tranſient glories of the Stage to live;

On his bright canvaſs each dramatic Muſe
A perfect copy of her ſcene reviews ;
Each, while thoſe ſcenes her loſt delight reſtore,
Almoſt forgets her Garrick is no more.---
O'er theſe I paſs reluctant, leaſt too long
The Muſe diffuſely ſpin a tedious Song.
Yet one ſhort pauſe, ye Pow'rs of Verſe, allow
To cull a Myrtle Leaf for MEYERS's Brow !
Tho' ſmall its Field, thy Pencil may preſume
To aſk a Wreath where Flowers immortal bloom.
As Nature's ſelf, in all her pictures fair,
Colours her Inſect works with niceſt care,
Nor better forms, to pleaſe the curious eye,
The ſpotted Leopard than the gilded Fly ;
So thy fine Pencil, in its narrow ſpace,
Pours the full portion of uninjur'd Grace,
And Portraits, true to Nature's larger line,
Boaſt not an Air more exquiſite than thine.
Soft Beauty's charms thy happieſt works expreſs,
Beauty thy model and thy Patroneſs.
For her thy care has to perfection brought
Th' uncertain toil, with anxious trouble fraught ;

Thy colour'd Chryſtal, at her fond deſire,
Draws deathleſs Luſtre from the dang'rous Fire,
And, pleas'd to gaze on its immortal charm,
She binds thy Bracelet on her ſnowy arm.
While Admiration views, with raptur'd eye,
Theſe Lights of Art that gild the Britiſh ſky;
Oh! may my Friend ariſe, with luſtre clear,
And add new Glory to this radiant Sphere.
This wiſh, my ROMNEY, from the pureſt ſource,
Has Reaſon's Warrant, join'd to Friendſhip's Force.
For Genius breath'd into thy infant Frame
The vital Spirit of his ſacred Flame,
Which frequent miſts of Diffidence o'ercloud,
Proving the vigor of the Sun they ſhroud.
Nature in thee her every gift combin'd,
Which forms the Artiſt of the nobleſt kind;
That fond Ambition, which beſtows on Art
Each talent of the Mind, and paſſion of the Heart;
That dauntleſs Patience, which all toil defies,
Nor feels the labour while it views the prize.
Enlight'ning Study, with maturing pow'r,
From theſe fair ſeeds has call'd the op'ning flow'r;

Thy juſt, thy graceful Portraits charm the view,
With every tender tint that TITIAN knew.
Round Fancy's circle when thy Pencil flies,
With what terrific pomp thy Spectres riſe!
What luſt of miſchief marks thy Witch's form,
While on the LAPLAND Rock ſhe ſwells the ſtorm!
Tho' led by Fancy thro' her boundleſs reign,
Well doſt thou know to quit her wild domain,
When Hiſtory bids thee paint, ſeverely chaſte,
Her ſimpler ſcene, with uncorrupted taſte.
While in theſe fields thy judging eyes explore,
What ſpot untried may yield its ſecret ore,
Thy happy Genius ſprings a virgin Mine
Of copious, pure, original Deſign;
Truth gives it value, and, diſtinctly bold,
The ſtamp of Character compleats thy Gold.
Thy Figures riſe in Beauty's nobleſt ſcale,
Sublimely telling their heroic Tale.
Still may thy Powers in full exertion blaze,
And Time revere them with unrivall'd praiſe!
May Art, in honour of a Son like thee,
So juſtly daring, with a ſoul ſo free,

Each ſeparate Province to thy care commend,
And all her Glories in thy Pencil blend!
May tender TITIAN's mellow Softneſs join,
With mighty ANGELO's ſublimer Line;
CORREGIO's Grace with RAPHAEL's Taſte unite,
And in thy perfect Works inchant the raviſh'd Sight!
How oft we find that when, with nobleſt aim,
The glowing Artiſt gains the heights of Fame,
To the well-choſen Theme he chiefly owes,
That praiſe which Judgment with delight beſtows.
The Lyre and Pencil both this Truth confeſs,
The happy Subject forms their full ſucceſs.
Hard is the Painter's fate, when, wiſely taught
To trace with eaſe the deepeſt lines of thought,
By hapleſs Fortune he is doom'd to rove
Thro' all the frolicks of licentious JOVE,
That ſome dark PHILIP, phlegmatic, and cold,*
(Whoſe needy TITIAN calls for ill-paid gold)
May with voluptuous Images enflame
The ſated Paſſions of his languid frame.

* Ver. 369. See NOTE LII.

Abuſe

Abuſe like this awakens generous Pain,
And juſt Deriſion mingles with Diſdain,
When ſuch a Pencil, in a Roman hand,
While the rich Abbeſs iſſues her command,
Makes wild St. Francis on the canvaſs ſprawl,
That ſome warm Nun in mimic Trance may fall,
Or, fondly gazing on the pious whim,
Feel faintly Love o'erload each lazy limb,
Miſtaking, in the Cloiſter's dull embrace,
The Cry of Nature for the Call of Grace.
But ſee th' hiſtoric Muſe before thee ſtand,
Her nobler ſubjects court thy happier Hand!
Her Forms of reverend Age, of graceful Youth,
Of public Virtue, and of private Truth:
The ſacred power of injur'd Beauty's charms,
And Freedom, fierce in adamantine Arms;
Whence Sympathy, thro' thy aſſiſting art,
With floods of Joy may fill the human heart.
But while the bounds of Hiſt'ry you explore,
And bring new Treaſures from her fartheſt ſhore,
Thro' all her various fields, tho' large and wide,
Still make Simplicity thy conſtant guide:

And moſt, my Friend, a Syren's wiles beware,
Ah! ſhun inſidious Allegory's ſnare!
Her Flattery offers an alluring wreath,
Fair to the eye, but poiſons lurk beneath,
By which, too lightly tempted from his guard,
Full many a Painter dies, and many a Bard.
How ſweet her voice, how dang'rous her ſpell,
Let SPENSER's Knights, and RUBENS' Tritons tell;
Judgment at colour'd riddles ſhakes his head,
And fairy Songs are prais'd, but little read;
Where, in the Maze of her unbounded Sphere,
Unbridled Fancy runs her wild Career.
In Realms where Superſtition's tyrant ſway
" Takes half the vigor of the ſoul away,"
Let Art for ſubjects the dark Legend ſearch,
Where Saints unnumber'd people every Church;
Let Painters run the wilds of OVID o'er,
To hunt for monſters which we heed no more.
But here, my ROMNEY, where, on Freedom's wings,
The towering Spirit to Perfection ſprings;
Where Genius, proud to act as Heav'n inſpires,
On Taſte's pure Altars lights his ſacred fires;

Oh!

Oh! here let Painting, as of old in GREECE,
With patriot paſſions warm the finiſh'd piece;
Let BRITAIN, happy in a gen'rous race,
Of manly Spirit, and of female Grace,
Let this frank Parent with fond eyes explore,
Some juſt memorials of the line ſhe bore,
In tints immortal to her view recall
Her deareſt Offspring on the ſtoried Wall.
  But ſome there are, who, with pedantic ſcorn,
Deſpiſe the Hero, if in BRITAIN born:
For them Perfection has herſelf no charms,
Without a Roman robe, or Grecian arms:
Our ſlighted Country, for whoſe Fame they feel
No generous Intereſt, no manly Zeal,
Sees public Judgment their falſe Taſte arraign,
And treat their cold contempt with due diſdain;
To the fair Annals of our Iſle we truſt,
To prove this patriot indignation juſt,
And, nobly partial to our native earth,
Bid Engliſh Pencils honour Engliſh Worth. *
  Shall BAYARD, glorious in his dying hour,
Of Gallic Chivalry the faireſt Flow'r,

* Ver. 436. See NOTE LIII.

Shall his pure Blood in Britiſh colours flow,
And BRITAIN, on her canvaſs, fail to ſhew
Her wounded SIDNEY, BAYARD's perfect peer, *
SIDNEY, her Knight, without Reproach or Fear,
O'er whoſe pale corſe heroic Worth ſhould bend,
And mild Humanity embalm her Friend!
Oh! ROMNEY, in his hour of Death we find
A Subject worthy of thy feeling Mind;
Methinks I ſee thy rapid Hand diſplay
The field of ZUTPHEN, on that fatal day,
When arm'd for freedom, 'gainſt the guilt of SPAIN,
The Hero bled upon the Belgic plain!
In that great moment thou haſt caught the Chief,
When pitying Friends ſupply the wiſh'd relief,
While Sickneſs, Pain, and Thirſt his pow'r ſubdue,
I ſee the draught he pants for in his view:
Near him the Soldier that expiring lies,
This precious Water views with ghaſtly eyes,
With eyes that from their ſockets ſeem to burſt,
With eager, frantic, agonizing Thirſt:

* Ver. 441. See NOTE LIV.

I ſee

I ſee the Hero give, oh! generous Care!
The Cup untaſted to this ſilent Pray'r;
I hear him ſay, with Tenderneſs divine,
"Thy ſtrong Neceſſity ſurpaſſes mine."
Shall Roman Charity for ever ſhare
Thro' every various School each Painter's Care?
And BRITAIN ſtill her bright examples hide
Of female Glory, and of filial Pride?
Inſtruct our eyes, my ROMNEY, to adore
Th' heroic Daughter of the virtuous MORE,*
Reſolv'd to ſave, or in th' attempt expire,
The precious relicks of her martyr'd Sire:
Before the cruel Council let her ſtand,
Preſs the dear ghaſtly Head with pitying Hand,
And plead, while Bigotry itſelf grows mild,
The ſacred duties of a grateful Child.
Forgive the Muſe, if haply ſhe commend
A Theme ill-choſen to her ſkilful Friend;
She, tho' its pow'r commands her willing heart,
Knows not the limits of thy lovely Art,

* Ver. 468. See NOTE LV.

Yet boldly owns an eager wiſh to ſee
Her darling Images adorn'd by thee.
Nor ſhall her ſocial Love in ſilence hide
The juſt emotions of her grateful Pride,
When thy quick Pencil pours upon her ſight
Her own Creation in a fairer light;
When her SERENA learns from thee to live,
And pleaſe by every charm that life can give.
Thou haſt imparted to th' ideal Fair
Yet more than Beauty's bloom, and Youth's attractive air;
For in thy ſtudious Nymph th' enamour'd Eye
May, thro' her breaſt, her gentle Heart deſcry;
See the fond thoughts, that o'er her Fancy roll,
And Sympathy's ſoft ſwell, that fills her ſoul.
But happier Bards, who boaſt a higher claim,
Aſk from thy Genius an increaſe of Fame.
  Oh! let the Siſters, who, with friendly aid,
The Grecian Lyre, and Grecian Pencil ſway'd,
Who join'd their rival Powers with fond delight,
To grace each other with reflected Light;
Let them in BRITAIN thus united reign,
And double luſtre from that union gain!

Not that my Verſe, adventurous, would pretend
To point each varied ſubject to my Friend;
Far nobler guides their better aid ſupply:
When mighty SHAKESPEARE to thy judging eye
Preſents that magic Glaſs, whoſe ample Round
Reflects each Figure in Creation's bound,
And pours, in floods of ſupernatural light,
Fancy's bright Beings on the charmed ſight.
This chief Inchanter of the willing breaſt,
Will teach thee all the magic he poſſeſt.
Plac'd in his Circle, mark in colours true
Each brilliant Being that he calls to view:
Wrapt in the gloomy ſtorm, or rob'd in light,
His weird Sifter or his fairy Sprite,
Boldly o'erleaping, in the great deſign,
The bounds of Nature, with a Guide divine.
Let MILTON's ſelf, conductor of thy way,
Lead thy congenial ſpirit to portray
In Colours, like his Verſe, ſublimely ſtrong,
The ſcenes that blaze in his immortal ſong.
See MICHAEL drawn, by many a ſkilful Hand,
As ſuits the Leader of the Seraph-Band!

But oh! how poor the proſtrate SATAN lies,*
With beſtial form debas'd and goatiſh eyes!
How chang'd from him who leads the dire debate,
Fearleſs tho' fallen, and in Ruin great!
Let thy bold Pencil, more ſublimely true,
Preſent his Arch Apoſtate to our view,
In worthier Semblance of infernal Pow'r,
And proudly ſtanding like a ſtately tow'r,
While his infernal mandate bids awake
His Legions, ſlumbering on the burning Lake.
Or paint him falling from the Realms of Bliſs,
Hurl'd in Combuſtion to the deep Abyſs!
In light terrific let the Flaſh diſplay
His Pride, ſtill proof againſt almighty Sway:
Tho' vanquiſh'd, yet immortal, let his Eye
The Lightning's flame, the Thunder's bolt defy,
And ſtill, with Looks of Execration, dare
To face the Horrors of the laſt Deſpair.
To theſe great Lords of Fancy's wide domain,
That o'er the human Soul unqueſtion'd reign,

* Ver. 523. See NOTE LVI.

To their ſuperior Guidance be conſign'd
Thy rival Pencil and congenial Mind.
Yet O! let Friendſhip, ere the Verſe ſhe cloſe,
Which in juſt Tribute to thy Merit flows,
The ſanguine wiſhes of her heart expreſs,
With fond preſages of thy full Succeſs.
May Health and Joy, in happieſt union join'd,
Breathe their warm Spirit o'er thy fruitful Mind!
To nobleſt Efforts raiſe thy glowing Heart,
And ſtring thy ſinews to the toils of Art!
May Independance, burſting Faſhion's chain,
To eager Genius give the flowing rein;
And o'er thy epic Canvaſs ſmile to ſee
Thy Judgment active, and thy Fancy free!
May thy juſt Country, while thy bold deſign
Recalls the Heroes of her ancient Line,
Gaze on the martial Group with dear delight!
May Youth and Valour, kindling at the ſight,
O'er the bright Tints with Admiration lean,
And catch new Virtue from the moral Scene!
May Time himſelf a fond Reluctance feel,
Nor from thy aged hand the Pencil ſteal,

But grant it ſtill to gain increaſing Praiſe,
In the late Period of thy lengthen'd days,
While faireſt Fortune thy long Life endears,
With RAPHAEL's Glory join'd to TITIAN's Years!

NOTES

NOTES

TO THE

FIRST EPISTLE.

AS there may poſſibly be ſome Readers of the foregoing Performance, who may wiſh to look into the ſources from whence the Author has borrowed ſome of his ideas, he has thrown together the ſubſequent Notes, and disjoined them from the body of the Work, as they are intended only for the peruſal of thoſe who have leiſure and diſpoſition for ſuch kind of reading.

NOTE I. VERSE 77.

MAKE hiſtory to life new value lend.] One of the moſt elegant writers of the preſent age, has made an ingenious effort to introduce Hiſtory into the dull province of Portrait-painting, "by repreſenting a whole family in a ſingle picture, under ſome intereſting hiſtorical ſubject ſuitable to their rank and character." See Fitzoſborne's Letters, p. 6. But as the beauties and advantages of this plan ſtruck forcibly on the imagination of this amiable Author, the infinite difficulties attending its execution were likewiſe fully open to his diſcernment. The ſucceſs muſt depend on the choice of ſubject: where that is not very happily adapted, the picture will probably contain ſome moſt ridiculous abſurdities—Perhaps the Reader may recollect an unfortunate inſtance or two of this kind.

NOTE II. VERSE 100.

Not leſs abſurd to flatter Nero's eyes.] Pliny furniſhes us with this ſingular anecdote, as an inſtance of the extravagant abuſe of Portrait-painting in his days, which, as he informs us, had arrived to a degree of madneſs. "Nero had ordered himſelf to be painted under the figure of a Coloſſus, upon cloth or canvaſs, a hundred and twenty feet in height." The ſame author informs us, that this prepoſterous picture, when it was finiſhed, met with its fate from lightning, which conſumed it, and involved likewiſe the moſt beautiful part of the gardens where it was placed in the conflagration. The Reader may find ſome ingenious remarks upon this ſubject, in the Notes ſur l'Hiſtoire de la Peinture ancienne extraite de l'Hiſtoire naturelle de Pline. Fol. London, 1725.

NOTE III. VERSE 108.

Bleſt be the pencil! which from death can ſave.] The ſweet illuſion of this enchanting art is prettily expreſſed in a Letter of Raphael's to his friend Franceſco Raifolini, a Bologneſe painter. The two artiſts had agreed to exchange their own portraits, and Raphael, on receiving his friend's picture, addreſſes him in the following words:

"Meſſer Franceſco mio caro ricevo in queſto punto il voſtro ritratto - - - - egli è belliſſimo, e tanto vivo, che m' inganno talora, credendomi di eſſere con eſſo voi, e ſentire le voſtre parole."

Raccolta di Lettere ſulla Pittura, &c. Tom. i. pag. 82.

The charm of Portrait-painting is ſtill more beautifully deſcribed in verſe by a friend of Raphael's, the amiable and accompliſhed Count Balthaſor Caſtiglione.

Sola tuos Vultus referens Raphaelis imago
Picta manu, curas allevat uſque meas:
Huic ego delicias facio, arriſuque jocoque
Alloquor, et tanquam reddere verba queat

Aſſenſu,

Aſſenſu, nutuque mihi ſæpe illa videtur
Dicere velle aliquid, et tua verba loqui.
Agnoſcit balboque Patrem, puer ore ſalutat.
Hoc ſolor, longos decipioque dies.

Theſe elegant lines are part of an epiſtle, written in the name of his Counteſs, Hyppolyte, to her huſband. See Pope's edition of the Poemata Italorum, Vol. ii. page 248.

NOTE IV. VERSE 126.

Inſpir'd by thee, the ſoft Corinthian Maid.] Pliny has tranſmitted to us the Hiſtory of the Maid of Corinth and her father. "Dibutades, a potter of Sicyon, firſt formed likeneſſes in clay at Corinth, but was indebted to his daughter for the invention; the girl being in love with a young man who was ſoon going from her into ſome remote country, traced out the lines of his face from his ſhadow upon the wall by candle-light. Her father, filling up the lines with clay, formed a buſt, and hardened it in the fire with the reſt of his earthen ware." Plin. Lib. 35.

Athenagoras, the Athenian philoſopher, gives a ſimilar account of this curious and entertaining anecdote, adding the circumſtance that the youth was ſleeping when the likeneſs was taken from his ſhadow. Περιεγραψεν αὐτε κοιμωμενε εν τοιχω την σκιαν.

The ſame writer, who lived in the ſecond century of the Chriſtian æra, informs us that this monument of ancient art was extant at Corinth in his time, though Pliny ſeems to intimate that it did not ſurvive the taking of that city by Mummius.

In the Poeſies de Fontenelle there is an epiſtle from the Maid of Corinth, whom the author calls Dibutadis, to her imaginary lover Polemon. She deſcribes her own work in the following Stanzas:

Une lampe pretoit une Lumiere ſombre
Qui m' aidoit encore à rever :
Je voyois ſur un mur ſe depeindre ton ombre,
Et m' appliquois à l'obſerver :

Car tout plait, Polemon, pour peu qu'il repreſente
L' objet de notre attachement,
C'eſt aſſez pour flater les langueurs d'une amante
Que l'ombre ſeule d'un amant.

Mais je pouſſai plus loin cette douce chimere,
Je voulus fixer en ces Lieux,
Attacher à ce mur une ombre paſſagere
Pour la conſerver à mes yeux.

Alors en la ſuivant du Bout d'une baguette
Je trace une Image de toi ;
Une image, il eſt vrai, peu diſtincte, imparfaite,
Mais enfin charmante pour moi.

NOTE V. VERSE 194.

'Twas then Panæus drew, with freedom's train.] Panæus was the brother of Phidias, the celebrated Sculptor, whom he is ſaid to have aſſiſted in his nobleſt works. Pauſanias, in his Fifth Book, gives an account of ſeveral pictures by this early Artiſt, and particularly of the picture here alluded to. It was painted in the celebrated portico called Ποικιλη, Pœcile.

Beſides a general repreſentation of the conflict, the flight of the barbarians, and a diſtant view of their ſhips, Theſeus, Minerva, and Hercules were, according to this author, exhibited in the piece. The moſt conſpicuous figures among the perſons engaged were Callimachus, and Miltiades, and a hero called Echetlus : he mentions alſo another

another hero, who is introduced into the picture, called Marathon, from whom, he ſays, the field had its name.

Pauſanias, fol. Lip. 1696. p. 37.

From Pliny's account of the ſame picture we learn that the heads of the generals were portraits—adeo jam colorum uſus percrebuerat, adeoque ars perfecta erat ut in eo Prælio ICONICOS duces pinxiſſe tradatur.— Plin. Lib. 35. c. 8.

Miltiades had the honour of being placed foremoſt in this illuſtrious group, as a reward for his having ſaved Athens, and all Greece.

Cor. Nep. in Vitâ Miltiadis.

Panæus flouriſhed, according to Pliny, in the 83d Olympiad, little more than forty years after the battle he painted.

NOTE VI. VERSE 198.

There Polygnotus, ſcorning ſervile hire.] Of the talents of Polygnotus much honourable mention is made by many of the beſt authors of antiquity, as Ariſtotle and Plutarch, Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis, &c. Pauſanias ſpeaks of the pictures here alluded to, and in his Tenth Book, introduces a very long deſcription of other pictures by the ſame artiſt, painted alſo from Homer in the Temple at Delphos. The paſſage however gives but a confuſed and imperfect idea of the painter's performance. How much the art is indebted to this ancient maſter, what grace and ſoftneſs he gave to the human countenance, what embelliſhments he added to the female figure and dreſs, are much more happily deſcribed by Pliny. Primus Mulieres lucidâ veſte pinxit, capita earum mitris verſicoloribus operuit, plurimumque picturæ primus contulit: ſiquidem inſtituit os adaperire, dentes oſtendere, vultum ab antiquo rigore variare. The ſame author likewiſe bears honourable teſtimony to the liberal ſpirit of this great artiſt, who refuſed any reward for his ingenious labours in the portico.—

tico.—Porticum gratuito, cum partem ejus Mycon mercede pingeret. Plin. Lib. 35. cap. 8.

He flouriſhed about the 90th Olympiad.

NOTE VII. VERSE 202.

Thy tragic pencil, Ariſtides, caught.] The city of Thebes had the honour of giving birth to this celebrated Artiſt. He was the firſt, according to Pliny, who expreſſed Character and Paſſion, the Human Mind, and its ſeveral emotions; but he was not remarkable for ſoftneſs of colouring. "His moſt celebrated picture was of an infant (on the taking of a town) at the mother's breaſt, who is wounded and expiring. The ſenſations of the mother were clearly marked, and her fear leaſt the child, upon failure of the milk, ſhould ſuck her blood." "Alexander the Great," continues the ſame author, "took this picture with him to Pella."

It is highly probable, according to the conjecture of Junius, (in his learned Treatiſe de Picturâ Veterum) that the following beautiful epigram of Æmilianus was written on this exquiſite picture:

Ἕλκε, τάλαν, παρὰ μητρὸς ὃν οὐκ ἔτι μᾶζον ἀμέλξεις
Ἕλκυσον ὑγρὸν ἅλιον νᾶμα καὶ λοῦσαι φθιμένης.
Ἡ δὴ γὰρ ξιφέεσσι λιποπνοος· ἀλλὰ τὰ μητρὸς
Φίλτρα καὶ εἰν αἴδῃ παιδοκομεῖν ἔμαθον.

It is not ill tranſlated into Latin by Grotius:

Suge, miſer, nunquam quæ poſthac pocula fuges;
Ultima ab exanimo corpore poc'la trahe!
Expiravit enim jam ſaucia; ſed vel ab orco
Infantem novit paſcere matris amor.

But

But this is far inferior, and ſo perhaps is the original itſelf, to the very elegant Engliſh verſion of it, which Mr. Webb has given us in his ingenious and animated "Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting."

Suck, little wretch, while yet thy mother lives,
Suck the laſt drop her fainting boſom gives!
She dies: her tenderneſs ſurvives her breath,
And her fond love is provident in death.

Webb, Dialogue 7. p. 161.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 206.

Correct Parrhaſius firſt to rich deſign.] The name of Parrhaſius is immortalized by many of the moſt celebrated ancient authors; and his peculiar talents are thus recorded in Pliny: Primus ſymmetriam picturæ dedit, primus argutias vultus, elegantiam capilli, venuſtatem oris: confeſſione artificum in lineis extremis palmam adeptus.—He is one of the four ancient painters, whoſe lives are written by Carlo Dati.—This ingenious Italian very juſtly queſtions the truth of the ſingular ſtory concerning Parrhaſius, preſerved in Seneca, where he is accuſed of purchaſing an old Olynthian captive, and expoſing him to a moſt wretched death, that he might paint from his agony the tortures of Prometheus. The ſame author contradicts on this occaſion a ſimilar falſehood concerning the great Michael Angelo, which was firſt circulated from the pulpit by an ignorant prieſt, as we learn from Gori's Hiſtorical Annotations to the Life of M. Angelo, by his ſcholar Condivi.

NOTE IX. VERSE 210.

The gay, the warm, licentious Zeuxis drew.] The Helen of Zeuxis is become almoſt proverbial: the Story of the Artiſt's having executed the picture from an aſſemblage of the moſt beautiful females is mentioned (though with ſome variation as to the place) by authors of great

credit, Pliny, Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, and Cicero. The laſt gives a very long and circumſtantial account of it.

De Inventione, Lib. 2.

If the ſtory is true, it is perhaps one of the ſtrongeſt examples we can find of that enthuſiaſtick paſſion for the fine arts which animated the ancients. Notwithſtanding her præeminence in beauty, it ſeems ſomewhat ſingular that the painter ſhould have choſen ſuch a character as Helen, as a proper decoration for the Temple of Juno. A moſt celebrated Spaniſh Poet, though not in other reſpects famous for his judgment, has, I think, not injudiciouſly metamorphoſed this Helen of Zeuxis into Juno herſelf.

Zeuſis, Pintor famoſo, retratando
De Juno el roſtro, las faciones bellas
De cinco perfettiſſimas donzellas
Eſtuvo attentamente contemplando.
Rimas de Lope de Vega.
Liſboa, 1605. p. 51-2.

Junius ſuppoſes this picture to have been rated a little too high.—

NOTE X. VERSE 216.

Yet oft to gain ſublimer heights he ſtrove.] Grace is the well-known excellence of Apelles, but that he ſometimes very happily attempted the ſublime, we learn both from Plutarch and Pliny, who ſpeak of his force and energy—The Alexander of Philip, ſays Plutarch, was invincible, the Alexander of Apelles inimitable.

He painted, ſays Pliny, things that ſurpaſs the power of painting, quæ pingi non poſſunt, Tonitrua, fulgura fulgetraque—

NOTE XI. VERSE 228.

While chilling damps upon the pencil hung.] That the Romans attained to no degree of excellence in Painting, or Sculpture, ſeems to be confeſt, and accounted for in the following paſſage of Tully's Tuſculan Diſputations, Lib. 1.

An cenſemus, ſi Fabio, nobiliſſimo homini, laudi datum eſſet quod pingeret, non multos etiam apud nos futuros Polycletos, et Parrhaſios fuiſſe? honos alit artes, omneſque incenduntur ad Studia Gloriâ, jacentque ea ſemper quæ apud quoſque improbantur.

The fine arts neceſſarily languiſh without publick protection or encouragement: but publick honours at Rome flowed in a very different channel. While the Roman boaſted his conſummate ſkill in every art of empire and government, he avowed, in many works of genius and taſte, his inferiority with an air of triumph.

Excudent alii ſpirantia mollius æra,
Credo equidem vivos ducent de marmore vultus:
Orabunt cauſas melius, cælique meatus
Deſcribent radio, et ſurgentia Sidera dicent.
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento:
Hæ tibi erunt artes, paciſque imponere morem:
Parcere ſubjectis et debellare ſuperbos.

Æneidos, Lib. VI.

NOTE XII. VERSE 244.

There ſtudious Vinci treaſur'd every rule.] Lionardo da Vinci was born near Florence in 1445. He was perhaps a man as univerſally accompliſhed as ever exiſted. Not only admirable beyond his Predeceſſors in his own profeſſion of Painting, but an excellent Architect and Muſician, and of great ſkill as an Anatomiſt. Beſides all theſe talents,

lents, he was, according to Vaſari, the beſt extempore Rimer of his Time.—His Hiſtory and Works are well known.—The ſingular circumſtance of his dying in the arms of Francis the Firſt, king of France, is mentioned by a French poet of the preſent age,

" Lorſque Francois premier, Roi digne d' être heureux,
Tint Leonarad mourant dans ſes bras genereux."

And the particulars of his death are thus curiouſly recorded by Vaſari, who ſpeaks in raptures of his various and exalted talents:

Finalmente venuto vecchio, ſtette molti meſi ammalato, et vedendoſi vicino alla morte, ſi volſe diligentemente informare de le coſe catoliche, & della via buona, et ſanta religione chriſtiana, et poi con molti pianti confeſſo e contrito, ſe bene e' non poteva reggerſi in piedi, ſoſte nendoſi nelle braccie di ſuoi amici, e ſervi, volſe divotamente pigliare il ſantiſſimo ſacramento, fuor del letto: ſopragiunſeli il Rè che ſpeſſo e amerevolmente le ſoleva viſitare: per il che egli per riverenza rizzatoſi a ſedere ſul letto, contando il mal ſuo & gli accidenti di quello moſtrava tuttavia quanto aveva offeſo dio, et gli huomini del mendo, non avendo operato nel arte come ſi conveniva: onde gli venne un paroſiſmo meſſagiero della morte. Per la qual coſa rizzatoſi il Rè, et preſola la teſta per aiutarlo, & porgerli Favore, accio che il male lo allegeriſſe; lo ſpirito ſuo, che diviniſſimo era, conoſcendo non potere havere maggiore honore, ſpirò in braccio à quell rè nella etá ſua d' anni 75.

Vaſari Vita di Lionardo da Vinci, p. 10, 11.

NOTE XIII. VERSE 251.

Gigantic Angelo his wonders wrought.] Michael Angelo Buonaroti was born near Florence 1474, and died at Rome 1564.

This illuſtrious man is too well known, both as an Architect and a Painter,

Painter, to need any encomium: he was alſo a Poet. His *Rime* were printed by the Giunto at Florence, in quarto, in 1623. The following Sonnet, which is to be found in Vaſari, to whom it is addreſſed, is at once a proof of his poetical talents, and his religious turn of mind: it may ſerve alſo as a leſſon to vanity, in ſhewing that even a genius of the ſublimeſt claſs entertained great apprehenſion concerning the mortality of his fame.

Giunti è già 'l corſo della vita mia,
Con tempeſtoſo mar per fragil barca,
Al comun porto, ov' à render ſi varca
Conto e ragion d' ogni opra triſta, e pia.

Onde l' affettuoſa fantaſia
Che l' arte mi fece idolo e monarca,
Cognoſco hor ben quant 'era d'error carca
E quel ch' a mal ſuo grado ognun deſia.

Gli amoroſi penſier, gia vani, e lieti
Che fien or' s'a due morti mi avicino?
D'una ſo certo, e l' altra mi minaccia.
Ne pinger ne ſcolpir fia piu che queti
L'anima volta a quello amor divino
Ch' aperſe a prender noi in croce le braccia.

A letter, addreſſed to his friend Vaſari, on the death of Urbino, his old and faithful ſervant, ſhews, that he united the ſoft virtues of a moſt benevolent heart to the ſublime talents of an elevated mind.—This letter is printed both in Vaſari, and in the firſt volume of Raccolta de Lettere ſulla Pittura, &c. p. 6.

NOTE XIV. VERSE 254.

Taſte, Fancy, Judgment, all on Raphael ſmil'd.] Raffaello da Urbino was born in 1483, and died 1520. His amiable qualities as a Man were not inferior to his exalted talents as an Artiſt. The reader will not be diſpleaſed to ſee the ſingular eulogium which the honeſt Vaſari has beſtowed on the engaging manners of this moſt celebrated Genius.

Certo fra le ſue doti ſingulari ne ſcorgo una di tal valore che in me ſteſſo ſtupiſco; che il cielo gli diede forza di poter moſtrare nell' arte noſtra uno effetto ſi contrario alle compleſſioni di noi pittori: queſto è che naturalmente gli artefici noſtri, non dico ſoli i baſſi, ma quelli che hanno umore d' eſſer grandi (come di queſto umore l'arte ne produce infiniti) lavorando nell' opere in compagnia di Raffaello, ſtavano uniti e di concordia tale che tutti i mali umori in veder lui s'amorzavano: e ogni vile e baſſo penſiero cadeva loro di mente. La quale unione mai non fu piu in altro tempo che nel ſuo. E queſto aveniva perche reſtavano vinti dalla corteſia e dall' arte ſua, ma più dal genio della ſua buona natura.

Vaſari Vita di Raff. p. 88.

To atone for the imperfect ſketch, which has been here attempted of theſe divine artiſts, (Michael Angelo and Raphael) the author intended to have preſented the reader with a long quotation from a moſt animated diſcourſe of the Preſident of the Royal Academy, in which he has placed theſe great maſters in a light of compariſon with each other. But as the diſcourſes of Sir Joſhua Reynolds are no longer ſcarce (a new edition being now publiſhed) he ſhall refer the reader to the Work itſelf. He will find this moſt happy and ingenious parallel in the diſcourſe delivered at the Royal Academy, December 10, 1772.

NOTE XV. VERSE 260.

The daring Julio, though by Raphael train'd.] Julio Romano was born at Rome 1492, and died at Mantua 1546.

His ſingular character is forcibly drawn by Vaſari. He was, according to this writer, the moſt ſucceſsful imitator of Raphael, the greater part of whoſe ſcholars became eminent, and were almoſt infinite in number. Raphael was particularly attentive to Julio, and loved him with the affection of a parent.

Vaſari Vita di Giulio.

NOTE XVI. VERSE 268.

More richly warm, the glowing Titian knew.] We find frequent cenſures thrown upon Titian by the criticks, for confining himſelf "to flattering the eye by the richneſs and truth of his colouring, without a proper attention to the higher branch of his art, that of intereſting our feeling by affecting ſubjects;" the criticiſm is indeed extended to the Painters of the Lombard School in general.

Du Bos, Tom. I. Sect. 10.

Why Titian choſe not to follow the finiſhed method of his excellent cotemporaries, he declared to Franceſco de Vargas, the embaſſador of Charles the Vth at Venice.

"I fear, (replied this eminent Painter to the queſtion of Vargas, I ſhould never equal the extreme delicacy which diſtinguiſhes the pencils of Corregio, Parmegiano, and Raphael: and even though I ſhould be ſucceſsful enough to equal them, I ſhould always rank below them, becauſe I ſhould be only accounted their imitator. In a word, ambition, which always attends the fine arts, has induced me to chooſe a way entirely new, in which I might make myſelf famed for ſomething, as the great Maſters have done in the route they have followed."

Antoine Perez, dans la ſoixante unieme de ſes Secondes Lettres.

This

This great Artiſt enjoyed a long life of uninterrupted health, and died during the plague at Venice in 1576, at the uncommon age of ninety-nine.

NOTE XVII. VERSE 282.

Soft as Catullus, ſweet Corregio play'd] Antonio da Corregio.—Very different accounts are given by different authors of the birth and fortunes of this exquiſite Painter. His capital pictures were executed about the year 1512, according to Vaſari; who relates, in a very affecting manner, the circumſtances of his poverty and death.

Having taken a journey on foot, in extremely hot weather, he imprudently drank cold water, which brought on a fever, of which he died at about the age of forty.

His colouring was moſt exquiſitely adapted to the delicate ſoftneſs of female beauty. To form a perfect picture of Adam and Eve (ſays an Italian writer on Painting) Adam ſhould be deſigned by Michael Angelo, and coloured by Titian; Eve deſigned by Raphael, and coloured by Corregio.—

The ill fortune of Corregio, and the groſs neglect of Art, in the very city, which he had adorned with the moſt exquiſite productions of his pencil, are expreſſed with great feeling in a letter of Annibal Carracci, written while he was ſtudying the works of Corregio, at Parma, to his couſin Lodovico, in 1580.—Vide Raccolta de Lettere, &c. Tom. I. p. 88.

NOTE XVIII. VERSE 284.

Though Parma claim it for her rival ſon.] Franceſco Mazzuoli was born at Parma in 1504, and is thence uſually called Parmegiano. His character is thus diſtinctly marked by Vaſari:

" Fu dal cielo largamente dodato di tutte quelle parti, che a un excellente pittore ſono richieſte, poi che diede alle ſue figure, oltre

quello, che ſi è detto di molti altri, una certa venuſta, dolcezza, e leggiadria nell attitudini, che fu ſua propria e particolare."—The ſame author gives us a particular deſcription of the ſingular and admirable portrait, which this delicate artiſt drew of himſelf reflected from a convex mirror: he relates alſo ſome curious circumſtances of his allegorical portrait of the emperor Charles the Vth, which he painted by memory, and by the recommendation of Pope Clement the VIIth. preſented to the emperor at Bologna.—The honeſt biographer laments, with great feeling, the errors and misfortunes of this moſt promiſing painter, who being ſeized, early in life, with the frenzy of turning alchemiſt, impaired his health and fortune by this fatal purſuit; his attachment to which however ſome authors have queſtioned: a delirious fever put a period to his melancholy days at the age of thirty-ſix, in his native city of Parma, 1540.

NOTE XIX. VERSE 290.

Till with pure judgment the Caracci came.] Lodovico Caracci, who with his couſins Annibal and Auguſtin eſtabliſhed the famous Academy of Bologna, was born in that city 1555. The circumſtance that occaſioned his death, as related by a French author, affords a ſingular proof how dangerous it is for an Artiſt to confide in the partial judgment of his particular friends.

Son dernier ouvrage qui eſt une Annonciation peinte à freſque, dans une des lunettes de la Cathedrale de Bologne, ne reuſſit pas; ſon age, une vuê affoiblie, & la grande elevation de l'Egliſe furent cauſe qu'il ſe confia à un ami pour voir d'en bas l'effet de l'ouvrage. Cet ami lui dit qu'il etoit bien, & qu'il pouvoit faire ôter les Echaufauds: il fut trompé; on critiqua fort cette peinture: Louis s'en chagrina de maniere qu'il ſe mit au lit, et Bologne perdit ce grand Homme en 1619.—Abrégé de la Vie des plus fameux Peintres. Paris 8vo. 1762. Tom. II. p. 50.

Auguſtin,

Auguſtin, who quitted the pencil for the engraver, and is much celebrated for his various accompliſhments, died at Parma in 1602.—Annibal, the immortal Painter of the Farneſe gallery, whom Pouſſin did not heſitate to rank with Raphael himſelf, died in a ſtate of diſtraction at Rome, 1609. This melancholy event is deſcribed in a very affecting letter written by an Italian prelate, who attended him in his laſt moments. Raccolta, Tom. II. p. 384.

NOTE XX. VERSE 295.

Young Zampieri ow'd his nobler name.] Domenico Zampieri, born at Bologna 1518, died at Naples, not without ſuſpicion of poiſon, 1640.—He entered early in life into the ſchool of the Caracci, and was there honoured with the affectionate appellation of Domenichino, from his extreme youth.—His Communion of St. Jerome was compared by the judicious Pouſſin to the Transfiguration of Raphael: yet Du Freſnoy has paſt a ſevere cenſure on Domenichino, and affirms that he has leſs nobleneſs in his works than any other artiſt who ſtudied in the ſchool of the Caracci. So contradictory are the opinions of the two moſt enlightened judges in this delicate art!

NOTE XXI. VERSE 297.

The learned Lanfranc in their ſchool aroſe.] Giovanni Lanfranco, born at Parma 1581, was knighted by Pope Urban the VIIIth, and died at Rome 1647.

NOTE XXII. VERSE 299.

The tender Guido caught his graceful air.] Guido Reni was born in Bologna 1595: exquiſite in grace, though deficient in expreſſion, he was held during his life in the higheſt eſtimation. A fatal paſſion for gaming involved him in continued ſcenes of diſtreſs. His perſonal

beauty was ſo great, that his maſter Lodovico Caracci is ſaid to have drawn his angels from the head of Guido.

NOTE XXIII. VERSE 305.

Titian's mute ſcholar, rival of his fame.] Titian is ſaid to have reſided in Spain from the year 1548 to 1553, and ſeems to have raiſed a ſtrong paſſion for Art in that country.—His moſt eminent diſciple was Juan Fernandez Ximenes de Navarrete, who is called by his Spaniſh Biographer, The Titian of Spain.—Though born deaf and dumb, from whence he derives his common title *el Mudo*, he roſe to great reputation as a Painter; and was warmly patronized by his Sovereign, as appears from the following incident—In painting the martyrdom of a Saint, he had introduced the figure of his perſonal enemy, who happened to be the King's Secretary, in the character of the Executioner: the Secretary complained to his maſter, and petitioned that his features might be effaced; but his Majeſty defended the Painter, and ordered the figure to remain.—In praiſing this ſingular genius, I have ventured to borrow ſomething like a conceit from the famous Spaniſh Poet Lope de Vega, who has celebrated his talents in the following verſes.

Del Mudo Pintor famoſiſſimo.

No quiſo el cielo que hablaſſe,
Porque con mi entendimiento
Dieſſe mayor ſentimiento
A las coſas que pintaſſe.
Y tanta vida les di
Con el pincel ſingular,
Que como no pude hablar,
Hize que hablaſſen por mi.

The Poet alſo honoured this favourite Artiſt, who died in 1572, with an Epitaph, which turns on the ſame idea, and which the curious

rious reader may find in the Work, from whence I have taken this ſhort account of him.

Vidas de los Pittores Eſpañoles por Palamino Velaſco, Octavo, London, 1744.

NOTE XXIV. VERSE 310.

And thou, Velaſquez, ſhare the honour due.] Don Diego Velaſquez de Silva, the moſt accompliſhed of the Spaniſh Painters, was born at Seville, 1594, and clos'd his honourable and ſplendid life at Madrid in 1660.—His maſter was Pacheco, a Spaniard, who united the ſiſter arts of Painting and Poetry.—Velaſquez was patronized by the famous Olivarez, and had the honour of painting our Charles the Firſt, during his viſit at Madrid: perhaps he contributed not a little to form the taſte and paſſion for art, by which that Prince was ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed. The Spaniſh Painter roſe to great honours in his own country, and had, like Rubens, the ſingular fortune to unite the character of an Ambaſſador with that of an Artiſt, being ſent on an extraordinary commiſſion, in 1648, to Pope Innocent X.

One of his moſt ſtriking hiſtorical pictures, was the expulſion of the Moors from Spain; a noble, national ſubject, which he painted for Philip the Third, in competition with three Artiſts of reputation, and obtained the preference.

But he is particularly celebrated for the ſpirit and energy of his Portraits; concerning which there are two ſingular anecdotes related by his Spaniſh Biographer; and the following may poſſibly amuſe the reader.

In 1639, he executed a portrait of Don Adrian Pulido Pareja, Commander in chief of an armament appointed to New Spain; and pleaſed himſelf ſo well in the execution, that he affixed his name to the picture; a circumſtance not uſual with him. He had painted with pencils of uncommon length, for the ſake of working at a greater diſtance, and with peculiar force; ſo that the picture (ſays my Spaniſh author) when near, is not to be diſtinguiſhed, and at a diſtance is a miracle. As Velaſquez,

after this Portrait was finiſhed, was at work in the palace, the King, as uſual, went privately to his apartment to ſee him paint; when obſerving the figure of Pareja, and taking it for the real perſon, he exclaimed with ſurprize, "What! are you ſtill here? have you not "your diſpatches? and why are you not gone?" But ſoon perceiving his miſtake, he turn'd to Velaſquez (who modeſtly doubted the reality of the deception) and ſaid, "I proteſt to you it deceived me." For this ſtory, ſuch as it is, I am indebted to the author whom I have quoted in the preceding Note. The celebrated Murillo, whoſe pictures are much better known in England than thoſe of his maſter, was a diſciple of Velaſquez.

NOTE XXV. VERSE 316.

Thy care the ſoft, the rich Murillo form'd.] Don Bartolome Eſtevan Murillo was born in the neighbourhood of Seville, in 1613. His firſt maſter was Juan de Caſtillo; but he ſoon ſettled in Madrid, under the protection of Velaſquez, who contributed to his improvement in the moſt generous manner. The Spaniards boaſt that Murillo became a great Painter, without ever travelling out of Spain. He is ſaid to have refuſed the offer of an eſtabliſhment in England from Charles the Second, and to have pleaded his age as an excuſe for not quitting his own country; where he died, and was buried with great marks of honour, in 1685.

NOTE XXVI. VERSE 323.

No mean hiſtorian to record their praiſe.] George Vaſari, to whom we are indebted for a moſt valuable hiſtory of Italian Painters, was born at Arezzo in Tuſcany, 1511.—Though the fame of the author ſeems to have eclipſed that of the artiſt, he roſe to conſiderable eminence as a painter, and has left us a particular and entertaining account of himſelf and his pictures in the cloſe of his great work—it is introduced

duced with an apology, in which he ſpeaks of his own talents, and extreme paſſion for his art, in the moſt modeſt and engaging manner.—His generous deſire of doing juſtice to the merit of others is moſt happily rewarded in the following Elogy, by the great Thuanus:

"Ob excellentiam artis, quam hiſtoria accurate & eleganter ſcripta illuſtravit, Georgius Vaſarius meruit, ut inter viros ingenio & literis præſtantes accenſeretur. Is Aretii in Etruria natus, pictor & architectus noſtra ætate præſtantiſſimus, diu magno Etruriæ Duci Coſmo, omnium liberalium artium, inter quas pictura et architectura ut referrentur obtinuit, fautori eximio navavit; editis paſſim ingenii ſui ad ſtupendum omnium ſpectaculum monumentis, et tandem hoc anno climacterico ſuo v kalend. Quintil. vivis exemptus eſt; exinde ſicuti teſtamento caverat, Florentia ubi deceſſit, Aretium in patriam tranſlatus; quo loco in principali ſecundum ſedem Epiſcopalem templo in ſacello ab ipſo juxta ſumptuoſo et admirando artificio exſtructo ſepultus.

Thuanus ſub ann. 1574.

NOTE XXVII. VERSE 342.

On her pure Style ſee mild Bologna claim.] The French author quoted above, under the article Caracci, not only ſpeaks with the greateſt warmth of the obligation, which Painting owes to Lodovico Caracci, for having raiſed it from that ſtate of corruption, into which it had fallen in all the ſchools of Italy; but at the ſame time points out alſo the various manieriſts who had chiefly contributed to its debaſement.

The ſtyle introduced by Lodovico is recommended by that excellent judge Sir Joſhua Reynolds (See Diſcourſe 1769) as better ſuited to grave and dignified ſubjects than the richer brilliancy of Titian.

NOTE XXVIII. VERSE 345.

————*Titian's golden rays.*] This expreſſion is borrowed from the cloſe of that elegant ſentence of modern Latin, which the author

of Fitzoſborne's Letters has ſo juſtly commended, "Aureo Titiani radio, qui per totam tabulam gliſcens eam verè ſuam denunciat." See his excellent letter on Metaphors, p. 50.

NOTE XXIX. VERSE 353.

And Raphael's Grace muſt yield to Rembrandt's Force.] Rembrant Van Pryn, born near Leyden 1606, died at Amſterdam 1674, or, according to ſome accounts, 1668. The numerous works of this great maſter, both with the engraver and pencil, have rendered him univerſally known. His ſingular ſtudies, and the pride which he ſeems to have taken in the natural force of his genius, appear ſtrongly marked in the two following paſſages of his French Biographer.

"Les murs de ſon attelier couverts de vieux habits, de piques, et d'armures extraordinaires, etoient toutes ſes etudes, ainſi qu'une armoire pleine d'etoffes anciennes, & d'autres choſes pareilles qu'il avoit coutume d'appeller ſes antiques.—Rembrant, qui ſe glorifioit de n'avoir jamais vu l'Italie, le dit un jour que Vandick l'etoit venu viſiter à Amſterdam: & qui lui repondit, "Je le vois bien." Rembrant naturellement bruſque reprit: "Qui es tu pour me parler de la ſorte?"—Vandick repondit; "Monſieur, je ſuis Vandick, pour vous ſervir."—Abrégé de la Vie des plus fameux Peintres, Tom. III. p. 113.

NOTE XXX. VERSE 356.

Yet, Holland, thy unwearied labours raiſe.] There is no article of taſte, on which different writers have run more warmly into the oppoſite extremes of admiration and contempt, than in eſtimating the painters of Holland. Thoſe who are enchanted by the ſublime conceptions of the Roman ſchool, are too apt precipitately to condemn every effort of the Dutch pencil as a contemptible performance; while thoſe, who are ſatisfied with minute and faithful delineations of

of nature, find abſolute perfection in the very pictures, which are treated by others with the moſt ſupercilious neglect.—But ſound and impartial judgment ſeems equally to diſclaim this haſty cenſure, and this inordinate praiſe;— and ranking the moſt eminent Dutch artiſts below the great Italian maſters, yet allows them conſiderable and peculiar merit.—A French author ſays, I think not unhappily, of the Dutch painters, that they are "Dans la peinture, ce que le comique & le plaiſant ſont dans la poeſie." In deſign their fort is certainly humour, and they have frequently carried it to great perfection.

NOTE XXXI. VERSE 380.

Proud of the praiſe by Rubens' pencil won.] Sir Peter Paul Rubens, who is happily ſtyled by Mr. Walpole, "The Popular Painter," was born at Cologne 1577, and died of the gout at Antwerp 1640. The hiſtory of his life furniſhes a moſt ſtriking incentive to the young painter's ambition.—The many accompliſhments which he poſſeſt, the infinitude of works which he produced, the reputation and eſteem, the various honours and ample fortune which he ſo juſtly acquired, preſent to the mind an animating idea of what may be expected from a happy cultivation of talents in a courſe of conſtant and ſpirited application. Though he viſited the court of Charles the Firſt in the publick character of an ambaſſador, it does not appear how long he reſided here;—Mr. Walpole conjectures about a year.—His pictures in the ceiling at Whitehall were not painted in England; which perhaps is the reaſon he has been at the pains of finiſhing them ſo neatly, that they will bear the neareſt inſpection; for he muſt have well known how greatly the reputation of any work depends on its firſt happy impreſſion on the publick, and concluded his pictures would be viewed by the king and court inſtantly on their arrival, and that the critics would not be candid enough to delay their remarks on them till they were elevated to their intended

tended height. This noble work was falling into decay, from which ſtate it has been lately reſcued by that excellent artiſt Mr. Cipriani, to whoſe care it has been moſt judiciouſly committed to be cleaned and repaired.—Rubens received for this work £.3000.

NOTE XXXII. VERSE 388.

Her ſoft Vandyke, while graceful portraits pleaſe.] Sir Anthony Vandyke, the celebrated ſcholar of Rubens, died of the ſame diſorder which proved fatal to his maſter, and at a much earlier period of life. He was born at Antwerp 1598, expired in Black Fryars 1641, and was buried in St. Paul's, near the tomb of John of Gaunt. On his firſt viſit to England he received no encouragement from the Court, but Charles, becoming ſoon afterwards acquainted with his merit, ſent him an invitation to return. Vandyke embraced the offer with joy; and the king, who ſhewed him, by frequent ſittings, the moſt flattering marks of eſteem, conferred on him the honour of knighthood in 1632, rewarding him alſo with the grant of an annuity of £.200 for life.

NOTE XXXIII. VERSE 391.

From Flanders firſt the ſecret power ſhe caught.] The Low Countries, though little celebrated for inventive genius, have given to mankind the two ſignal diſcoveries, which have imparted, as it were, a new vital ſpirit both to Literature and to Painting. This honour however has been brought into queſtion—Germany made a ſtrong, but unſucceſsful effort to rob Holland of the glory which ſhe derives from the firſt invention of Printing: and Painting in oil (it has been ſaid) was known in Italy before the time of John Van Eyck, or John of Bruges, as he is commonly called; to whom that diſcovery is generally aſcribed, about the year 1410.——But Vaſari, in his Life of Antonello da Meſſina, relates very particularly the circumſtances of

of Van Eyck's invention, and the ſubſequent introduction of the ſecret into Italy. A moſt learned antiquarian and entertaining writer of our own time has ſuppoſed that Van Eyck might poſſibly "learn the ſecret of uſing oil in England, and take the honour of the invention to himſelf, as we were then a country little known to the world of arts, nor at leiſure, from the confuſion of the times, to claim the diſcovery of ſuch a ſecret."——Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting, Vol. I. p. 29.———The conjecture is not without ſome little foundation;—but the conjectural claims which either Italy or England can produce to this excellent invention, are by no means ſufficiently ſtrong to annihilate the glory of the happy and ingenious Fleming.

Since the preceding part of this Note was written, the reputation both of Van Eyck, and his encomiaſt Vaſari, has been very forcibly attacked in an Eſſay on Oil-painting, by Mr. Raſpe; an Eſſay which diſcovers ſuch a zealous attachment to the arts, and ſuch an active purſuit of knowledge, as do great credit to its ingenious author. But, though I have peruſed it with the attention it deſerves, it does not lead me to retract what I had ſaid; becauſe, after all his reſearches on this ſubject, it appears that although Oil-painting was not abſolutely the invention of Van Eyck, it was yet indebted to him for thoſe improvements which made it of real value to his profeſſion.—The ingenious Fleming ſeems therefore to be ſtill entitled to thoſe honours that have been laviſhed on his name, as improvement in ſuch caſes is often more uſeful and more meritorious than invention itſelf, which is frequently the effect of chance, while the former ariſes from well-directed ſtudy.

NOTE XXXIV. VERSE 395.

Where ſumptuous Leo courted every Muſe.] The name of Medicis is familiar to every lover of the fine arts. John de Medicis, the Cardinal, was raiſed to the papal See 1513. He continued that liberal patronage

tronage and encouragement to learning, which had before diſtinguiſhed his illuſtrious family. He was profuſe and magnificent. The various, and celebrated productions of taſte and genius under his pontificate, clearly mark the age of Leo the Xth as one of the great æras of literature.

NOTE XXXV. VERSE 405.

Untrodden paths of Art Salvator tried.] Salvator Roſa was born at a village near Naples, in 1615. After a youth of poverty and adventure, he raiſed himſelf by his various and uncommon talents into lucrative reputation. Having paſſed nine years at Florence, in conſiderable employment, he ſettled in Rome, and died there at the age of 58, in 1673.—He was one of the few characters who have poſſeſſed a large portion of pleaſant vivacity and ſatirical humour, with a ſublime imagination. His talents as a painter are univerſally celebrated; but his ſocial virtues, though perhaps not inferior, are far from being ſo generally known. In the "Raccolta di Lettere ſulla Pittura" there are many of his letters to his intimate friend Ricciardi, an Italian poet, and profeſſor of moral philoſophy at Piſa, which perfectly diſplay the warmth of his friendſhip, and the generoſity of his heart.—They contain alſo ſome amuſing anecdotes relating to his profeſſion, and the great delight which he took in diſcovering hiſtorical ſubjects of a peculiar caſt, untouched by other painters, and appearing to an ignorant eye almoſt beyond the limits of his art. He ſeems to deſcribe himſelf with juſtice, as well as energy, in the following words of a letter to Ricciardi "tutto bile, tutto ſpirito, tutto fuoco."—Though he muſt have been wonderfully pleaſant as a companion, and valuable as a friend, yet he laments that his ſatires had made him many enemies, and heartily wiſhes he had never produced them: In that which relates to painting, he expoſes indeed the vices of his brethren with great freedom and ſeverity.—It is remarkable that his

poetry abounds more with learned alluſions than with high flights of imagination; yet in the ſatire I have mentioned, there is much whimſical fancy. An ape is introduced applying to a painter, and begging to learn his profeſſion, as Nature he ſays has given him a genius for the mimetic arts.—The painter complies—but his diſciple, after an apprenticeſhip of ten years, bids his maſter adieu, with many humorous execrations againſt the art of Painting,—Other parts of the poem contain many ſenſible and ſerious remarks on the abuſes of the pencil; and as the author has given us a portrait of himſelf in his poetical character, I ſhall preſent it to the reader as a ſpecimen of his ſtyle.

La ſtate all ombra, e il pigro verno al foco
Tra modeſti deſii l' anno mi vede
Pinger per gloria, e poetar per gioco.
Delle fatiche mie ſcopo, e mercede
E' ſodisfare al genio, al giuſto, al vero:
Chi ſi ſente ſcottar, ritiri 'l piede.

Dica pur quanto sà rancor ſevero:
Contro le ſue ſaette ho doppio uſbergo;
Non conoſco intereſſe, e ſon ſincero:
Non ha l'invidia nel mio petto albergo:
Solo zelo lo ſtil m'adatta in mano,
E per util commune i fogli vergo.

Satire di Salvator Roſa, pag. 68, Edit. Amſterdam, 1719.

NOTE XXXVI. VERSE 427.

The ſage Pouſſin, with pureſt fancy fraught.] Nicolas Pouſſin was born at Andely in Normandy 1594: one of his firſt patrons was the

whimſical Italian poet Marino, who being ſtruck with ſome freſco works of the young painter at Paris, employed him in ſome deſigns from his own poem l'Adone, and enabled him to undertake an expedition to Rome. He was recalled from thence by Cardinal Richelieu in 1640, but upon the death of Richelieu and the king he returned to Rome, where he ended a life of primitive ſimplicity and patient application in 1665.

NOTE XXXVII. VERSE 435.

Then roſe Le Brun, his ſcholar, and his friend.] Charles Le Brun, univerſally known by his Battles of Alexander, and his treatiſe on the paſſions, was born in Paris 1619: having preſided over the French Academy, with great reputation, more than forty years, he died in 1690, partly, as the author of the Abrégé aſſures us, from the chagrin which he received from a cabal raiſed againſt him in favour of his rival Mignard: but neither his own works, nor the partial favour of his patron Louvois, nor the friendſhip of Moliere, who has written a long poem in his praiſe, have been able to raiſe Mignard to the level of Le Brun.

NOTE XXXVIII. VERSE 441.

Thy dawn, Le Sueur, announc'd a happier taſte.] Euſtache Le Sueur (who, without the advantage of ſtudying in Italy, approached nearer than any of his countrymen to the manner of Raphael) was a native of Paris. Le Brun, who came to viſit him in his laſt moments, is reported to have ſaid, on quitting his chamber, "Que la mort alloit lui tirer une groſſe epine du pied." If he was capable of uttering ſuch a ſentiment, at ſuch a time, he thoroughly deſerved the fate which is mentioned in the preceding Note.

NOTE XXXIX. Verse 449.

Though Freſnoy teaches, in Horatian ſong.] Charles Alfonſe du Freſnoy, author of the celebrated Latin poem de Arte graphicâ, very haſtily tranſlated into Engliſh proſe by Dryden, was himſelf a painter of ſome eminence, and the intimate friend of Mignard. He died in a village near Paris, at the age of forty-four, in 1665.

NOTES

TO THE

SECOND EPISTLE.

NOTE XL. Verse 15.

THOUGH foreign Theoriſts, with Syſtem blind.] The vain and frivolous ſpeculations of ſome eminent French authors, concerning our national want of genius for the fine arts, are refuted with great ſpirit in an ingenious eſſay by Mr. Barry, entitled, "An Enquiry into the real and imaginary Obſtructions to the Acquiſition of the Arts in England." As this work highly diſtinguiſhes the elegance of his pen, his Venus riſing from the ſea does equal honour to his pencil.

NOTE XLI. Verse 33.

Fierce Harry reign'd, who, ſoon with pleaſure cloy'd.] In this ſhort account of the influence which the different characters of our Sovereigns have had on the progreſs of national Art, the Author is indebted principally to Mr. Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting.

NOTE XLII. Verse 45.

Untaught the moral force of Art to feel.] An accompliſhed Critic of our own time has touched on *the moral Efficacy of Picture*, with his uſual elegance and erudition. After having illuſtrated the ſubject from

from the writings of Ariſtotle and Xenophon, he concludes his remarks with the following reflection:—" Yet, conſidering its vaſt power in morals, one cannot enough lament the ill deſtiny of this divine art, which, from the chaſte handmaid of Virtue, hath been debauched, in violence of her nature, to a ſhameleſs proſtitute of Vice, and procureſs of Pleaſure."—Hurd's Note on the following line of Horace:

" *Suſpendit picta vultum mentemque tabella.*"

To this let me add one obſervation for the honour of our Engliſh artiſts!—The proſtitution of the pencil, ſo juſtly lamented by this amiable writer, is perhaps leſs frequent in this kingdom, than in any country whatever, in which Painting has been known to riſe to an equal degree of perfection.

NOTE XLIII. VERSE 93.

Yet to thy Palace Kneller's ſkill ſupplied.] Sir Godfrey Kneller, born at Lubec 1646, ſettled in England 1674, was knighted by King William, created a Baronet by George the Firſt, and died 1723.—No Painter was ever more flattered by the Muſes; who gave him credit for talents which he never diſplayed. Dryden ſays, in his enchanting Epiſtle to Kneller:

> Thy genius, bounded by the times, like mine,
> Drudges on petty draughts, nor dares deſign
> A more exalted work, and more divine.

But the drudgery of the Poet aroſe from the moſt cruel neceſſity; that of the Painter, from avarice, the bane of excellence in every profeſſion!—If Sir Godfrey had any talents for hiſtory, which is ſurely very doubtful, we have, as Mr. Walpole well obſerves, no reaſon to regret that he was confined to portraits, as his pencil has faithfully tranſmitted to us " *ſo many ornaments of an illuſtrious age.*"

Though

Though I have partly ſubſcribed to the general idea, that William, in whoſe reign this Painter principally flouriſhed, "contributed nothing to the advancement of arts," yet I muſt obſerve, that his employing Kneller to paint the Beauties at Hampton Court, his rewarding him with knighthood, and the additional preſent of a gold medal and chain, weighing £. 300, may juſtify thoſe lines of Pope, which deſcribe "The Hero, William," as an encourager of Painting.

NOTE XLIV. VERSE 97.

While partial Taſte from modeſt Riley turn'd.] John Riley was born in London 1646: Mr. Walpole relates an anecdote of his being much mortified by Charles the Second; who, looking at his own picture, exclaim'd, "Is this like me? then, Ods-fiſh, I am an ugly fellow."—The ſame author ſays happily of this artiſt, "With a quarter of Sir Godfrey's vanity, he might have perſuaded the world he was as great a maſter." Notwithſtanding his extreme modeſty, he had the good fortune to be appointed Principal Painter, ſoon after the Revolution, but died an early martyr to the gout 1691.

NOTE XLV. VERSE 101.

And Thornhill's blaze of Allegory gilt.] Sir James Thornhill, born in Dorſetſhire 1676, was nephew to the celebrated Sydenham, and educated by the liberality of that great phyſician. He afterwards acquired a very ample fortune by his own profeſſion; was in parliament for Weymouth, knighted by George the Second, and died 1732.—His talents as a Painter are univerſally known, from his principal works at Greenwich, St. Paul's, &c.

NOTE XLVI. VERSE 111.

The youthful Noble, on a princely plan.] About twenty years ago, the preſent Duke of Richmond opened, in his houſe at Whitehall, a gallery

a gallery for artiſts, completely filled with a ſmall but well-choſen collection of caſts from the antique, and engaged two eminent artiſts to ſuperintend and direct the ſtudents.—This noble encouragement of art, though ſuperſeded by a royal eſtabliſhment, is ſtill entitled to remembrance and honour: it not only ſerved as a prelude to more extenſive inſtitutions, but contributed much towards forming ſome capital artiſts of the preſent time. The name of Mortimer is alone ſufficient to reflect a conſiderable luſtre on this early ſchool.

NOTE XLVII. VERSE 134.

Teach but thy tranſient tints no more to fly.] Although the ſuperior excellencies of this admirable artiſt make us peculiarly regret the want of durability in his exquiſite productions; yet he is far from being the only artiſt, whoſe pictures ſoon diſcover an appearance of precipitate decay. Fugitive colouring ſeems indeed to be the chief defect among our preſent painters in oil; and it muſt be the moſt ardent wiſh of every lover of art, that ſo great an evil may be effectually remedied. As the Royal Academy is a ſociety of enlightened artiſts, eſtabliſhed for the improvement of every branch of Painting, it may be hoped that they will pay attention to this mechanical point, as well as to the nobler acquirements of art, and employ ſome perſon, who has patience and abilities for ſuch an office, to diſcover, by a courſe of experiments, to what cauſe this important evil is owing. If it be found to ariſe from the adulteration of colours, oils, and varniſhes, might it not be eligible for the Academy to follow the example of another profeſſion, who, where health and life are concerned, obviate the difficulty of getting their articles genuine from the individual trader, by opening a ſhop at the expence of the Society, to prepare and ſell the various ingredients, free from thoſe adulterations which private intereſt might otherwiſe produce?

But there may be no juſt ground of complaint againſt the integrity of the colourman, and this failure may perhaps ariſe from the artiſt's

mixing his colours, and their vehicles in improper proportions to each other; that is, inſtead of painting with oil properly thickened with colour, uſing oil only fully ſtained with it, to which a proper conſiſtence (or body as the painters call it) is given by ſtrong gum varniſhes; in ſhort, uſing more vehicle than colour; by which, although moſt brilliant and tranſparent effects may be produced, yet the particles of colour are too much attenuated, and divided from each other, and conſequently leſs able to withſtand the deſtructive action of light. If the deficiency complained of originates from this ſource, the Academy, by a careful courſe of experiments, may be able clearly to aſcertain what preparations of the more delicate colours are moſt durable; what oils and varniſhes will beſt preſerve the original brilliancy of the paint; what are the beſt proportions for this purpoſe in which they can be uſed; and how far glazing (that almoſt irreſiſtible temptation to oil-painters) may or may not be depended on. All theſe points are at preſent ſo far from being known with certainty, that perhaps there are not two Painters, who think perfectly alike on any one of them. The author hopes, that the gentlemen of the pencil will pardon his preſuming to offer a hint on this delicate ſubject, with which he does not pretend to be intimately acquainted. The ideas, which he has thus ventured to addreſs to them, ariſe only from the moſt ardent wiſh, that future ages may have a juſt and adequate ſenſe of the flouriſhing ſtate of Painting in England in the reign of George the Third, and that our preſent excellent artiſts may not be reduced to depend on the uncertain hand of the engraver for the eſteem of poſterity.

A very liberal Critic *, in his flattering remarks on the Poem, ſeems, in ſpeaking of this Note, to miſtake a little the meaning of its author, who alluded only to that defect in colouring, where the finer tints are ſo managed, for the ſake of an immediate and ſhort-liv'd brilliancy, that they ſink very ſoon into no colour at all. He did not

* *Vide* the Gentleman's Magazine for November 1778, page 526.

mean to touch on thoſe changes in Painting, where the colours all grow darker, the lights become brown, and the ſhadows one maſs of black. This is likewiſe a great evil, and calls aloud for redreſs. Perhaps the Critic above mentioned has pointed out the true cauſe of this defect, *viz.* the indiſcriminate blending of the colours, and the not uſing pure, ſimple, uncompounded tints.

NOTE XLVIII. VERSE 138.

The leading Principles of liberal Art.] I embrace with pleaſure the opportunity of paying this tribute to the great artiſt here mentioned, who is not only at the head of his own profeſſion, but may juſtly be ranked among the firſt writers of the age. His diſcourſes, not merely calculated for the improvement of the young artiſts to whom they are addreſſed, contain all the principles of true and univerſal taſte, embelliſhed with great brilliancy of imagination, and with equal force of expreſſion.

NOTE XLIX. VERSE 151.

Thy Ugolino, &c.] As the ſubject of this admirable picture is taken from a poet ſo little known to the Engliſh reader as Dante, it may not perhaps be impertinent to ſay, that in Richardſon's Diſcourſe on the Science of a Connoiſſeur, there is a tranſlation of the ſtory in Engliſh blank verſe. A young and noble author, now living, has obliged the world with a tranſlation of it in rhyme.—As to the picture, no artiſt could expreſs more happily the wild and ſublime ſpirit of the poet from whom he drew. We may juſtly apply to him the compliment which a lively Italian addreſſed to a great man of his own country, but of far inferior expreſſion.

" Fabro gentil, ben ſai,
Ch' ancor tragico caſo e' caro Oggetto,
E che ſpeſſo l' Horror va col Diletto."

Marino.

NOTE

NOTE L. VERSE 165.

Now Art exults, with annual Triumphs gay.] While we are delighted with the increaſing ſplendor of theſe annual entertainments, it is but juſt to remember, that we are indebted to the Society of Arts and Sciences for our firſt public exhibition of Paintings. The different ſocieties of artiſts ſoon followed ſo excellent an example; and our rapid and various improvements in this lovely art reflect the higheſt honour on this happy inſtitution. Our exhibitions at once afford both the beſt nurſery for the protection of infant genius, and the nobleſt field for the diſplay of accompliſhed merit: nor do they only adminiſter to the benefit of the artiſt, and the pleaſure of the publick: they have ſtill a more exalted tendency; and when national ſubjects are painted with dignity and force, our exhibitions may juſtly be regarded as ſchools of public virtue. Perhaps the young ſoldier can never be more warmly animated to the ſervice of his country, than by gazing, with the delighted public, on a ſublime picture of the expiring hero, who died with glory in her defence. But, not to dwell on their power of inſpiring martial enthuſiaſm, our exhibitions may be ſaid to have a happy influence on the manners and morals of thoſe, who fill the different departments of more tranquil life. In ſupport of this ſentiment I beg leave to tranſcribe the following judicious remark from an author, who has lately obliged the public with two little volumes of elegant and ſpirited Eſſays. "They, whoſe natural feelings have been properly improved by culture, nor have yet become callous by attrition with the world, know from experience, how the heart is mollified, the manners poliſhed, and the temper ſweetened, by a well-directed ſtudy of the arts of imitation. The ſame ſenſibility of artificial excellence, extends itſelf to the perception of natural and moral beauty; and the ſtudent returns from the artiſt's gallery to his ſtation in ſociety, with a breaſt more diſpoſed to feel and to reverberate the endearments of ſocial life, and of reciprocal benevolence."——KNOX's Eſſays, moral and literary, 1778, p. 264, on Sculpture.

NOTE LI. VERSE 255.

Thy Talents, Hogarth! &c.] William Hogarth was born in London, 1698, and put apprentice to an engraver of the moſt ordinary claſs; but his comic talents, which are ſaid to have appeared firſt in the prints to Hudibras, ſoon raiſed him to fame and fortune.—He married a daughter of Sir James Thornhill, and died 1764.—The peculiar merits of his pencil are unqueſtionable. His Analyſis of Beauty has been found more open to diſpute; but however the greater adepts in the ſcience may differ on its principles, it may certainly be called an honourable monument of his genius and application.

NOTE LII. VERSE 370.

Whoſe needy Titian calls for ill-paid gold.] Richardſon has fallen into a miſtake concerning the famous Danae, and other pictures of Titian, which he ſays (in quoting a letter of Titian's without conſidering its addreſs) were painted for Henry the VIIIth of England, a tyrant indeed, voluptuous, and cruel, but ſtill leſs deteſtable than the ſullen and unnatural Philip the IId of Spain, who filled up the meaſure of his ſuperior guilt by the horrid aſſaſſination of his ſon. Philip, on his marriage with Mary, aſſumed the title of King of England; and to him Titian addreſſed the letter, which ſpeaks of the pictures in queſtion: the painter frequently mentions his attachment to his unworthy patron.

His ſollicitude to enſure his protection and favour is ſtrongly marked in the following ſhort paſſage of a letter which he addreſſed to one of Philip's attendants. "Mando ora la poeſia di Venere e Adone, nella quale V. S. vedrà, quanto ſpirito e amore ſo mettere nell' opere di ſua Maeſtà."——Raccolta, tom. ii, p. 21.

How poorly this great artiſt was rewarded for his ill-directed labour, appears very forcibly in a long letter of complaint, which he had ſpirit enough to addreſs to the king on the many hardſhips he ſuffered in being unable to obtain the payment of the penſion which

had been granted to him by the emperor Charles the Vth.——Raccolta, tom. ii. p. 379.

NOTE LIII. VERSE 436.

Bid Engliſh pencils honour Engliſh worth.] The great encouragement given our painters to ſelect ſubjects from Engliſh hiſtory, has of late years been very obſervable. Many individuals of rank and fortune have promoted this laudable plan with ſpirit and effect; and the Society of Arts and Sciences have confined their premiums to ſubjects taken from the Britiſh Annals.

NOTE LIV. VERSE 441.

Her wounded Sidney, Bayard's perfect peer.] The gallant, the amiable and accompliſhed Sir Philip Sidney may be juſtly placed on a level with the noble Bayard, "Le Chevalier ſans peur & ſans reproche." whoſe glory has of late received new luſtre from the pen of Robertſon and the pencil of Weſt. The ſtriking ſcene here alluded to, which preceded the death of Sidney, has not yet, I believe, appeared upon canvaſs, but is forcibly deſcribed by the noble and enthuſiaſtic friend of Sidney, the Lord Brooke.——See Biograph. Britan. Art. Sidney.

The particulars alſo are minutely deſcribed, and with great feeling, in a letter from his uncle Leiceſter to Sir Thomas Heneage, quoted in Collins's Memoirs of the Sidnies. The tide of national admiration flowed very ſtrong in favour of Sidney, when Mr. Walpole, in ſpeaking of Lord Brooke, appeared to check the current; but the merits of Sidney are ſufficient to bear down all oppoſition.—Inſtead of joining the elegant author I have mentioned, in conſidering Sir Philip Sidney as "an aſtoniſhing object of temporary admiration," I am ſurprized that ſo judicious an author ſhould ever queſtion ſo fair a title to univerſal regard. The learning and munificence, the courage

and

and courteſy of Sidney endeared him to every rank, and he juſtly challenges the laſting affection of his country from the cloſing ſcene of his life, in which heroiſm and humanity are ſo beautifully blended. I never can think this accompliſhed character any ways degraded by his having written a tedious romance (in which however there are many touches of exquiſite beauty and ſpirit) to amuſe a moſt amiable ſiſter, whom he tenderly loved; or by his having threatened an unworthy ſervant of his father's with death in a haſty billet, merely to intimidate and deter him from the future commiſſion of an infamous breach of truſt, in opening his letters.

NOTE LV. VERSE 468.

Th' heroic Daughter of the virtuous More.] Margaret, eldeſt daughter of the celebrated Sir Thomas More. The ſcene which I have propoſed for the ſubject of a picture, is taken from the following paſſage in Ballard:

"After Sir Thomas More was beheaded, ſhe took care for the burial of his body in the chapel of St. Peter's ad Vincula, within the precincts of the Tower, and afterwards ſhe procured his corpſe to be removed, and buried in the chancel of the church at Chelſea, as Sir Thomas More, in his life-time, had appointed. His head having remained about fourteen days upon London Bridge, and being to be caſt into the Thames to make room for others, ſhe bought it. For this ſhe was ſummoned before the council, as the ſame author relates, and behaved with the greateſt firmneſs, juſtifying her conduct upon principles of humanity and filial piety. She was, however, impriſoned, but ſoon releaſed, and dying nine years after her father, at the age of thirty-ſix, was buried at St. Dunſtan's, in Canterbury. The head of her father, which ſhe had preſerved with religious veneration, in a box of lead, was, at her particular requeſt, committed with her to the grave. It was ſeen ſtanding on her coffin in the year 1715, when the vault of the Roper (her huſband's) family was opened."——See Ballard's Memoirs of learned Ladies, p. 36.

The character of this amiable woman is happily drawn both by Addiſon and Walpole.—She married, at the age of twenty, William Roper, Eſquire, of Kent, to the infinite ſatisfaction of her father; for ſhe ſeems to have been the deareſt object of his parental affection, which is very ſtrongly marked in his letters addreſſed to her. She was indeed moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed by her learning, in an age, when the graces of the mind were regarded as an eſſential article in female education: but the beauty and force of her filial piety reflects a ſtill ſuperior luſtre on this accompliſhed woman.—There is more than one paſſage in her life, which would furniſh an admirable ſubject for the pencil. Her interview with her father, on his return to the Tower, is mentioned as ſuch by Mr. Walpole.

NOTE LVI. VERSE 523.

But, oh! how poor the proſtrate Satan lies.] It is remarkable, that the greateſt painters have failed in this particular. Raphael, Guido, and Weſt, are all deficient in the figure of Satan. Richardſon obſerves, in his deſcription of the pictures of Italy,—" Je n'ai jamais vu d'aucun Maître une repreſentation du Diable, prince des Diables, qui me ſatisfit." Page 500.

In recommending this ſubject to the pencil, it may be proper to obſerve, that it is not only extremely difficult, but even attended with danger, if we credit the following curious anecdote, in a medical writer of great reputation:—Spinello, fameux Peintre Toſcan, ayant peint la chute des anges rebelles, donna des traits ſi terribles à Lucifer, qu'il en fut lui-meme ſaiſi d'horreur, & tout le reſte de ſa vie il crut voir continuellement ce Demon lui reprocher de l'avoir repreſenté ſous une figure ſi hidieuſe.——Tiſſot de la Santé des Gens de Lettres.

As this ſtory is ſo ſingular, it may amuſe ſome readers to ſee it in the words of Vaſari, from whom Tiſſot ſeems to have taken it.—The Italian Biographer ſays, in deſcribing a picture by Spinello Aretino,

no, who flouriſhed in the cloſe of the 14th century, Si vede un Lucifero gia mutato in beſtia bruttiſſima. E ſi compiacque tanto Spinello di farlo orribile, e contraffatto, che ſi dice (tanto puo alcuna fiata l'immaginazione) che la detta figura da lui dipinta gl'apparue in ſogno domandandolo, doue egli l'hauveſſe veduta ſi brutta e per che fattole tale ſcorno con i ſuoi pennelli: E che egli ſvegliatoſi dal ſonno, per la paura, non potendo gridare, con tremito grandiſſimo ſi ſcoſſe di maniera che la moglie deſtataſi lo ſoccorſe: ma niente di manco fu per cio a riſchio, ſtringendogli il cuore, di morirſi per cotale accidente, ſubitamente. Ben che ad ogni modo ſpiritaticcio, e con occhi tondi, poco tempo vivendo poi ſi conduſſe alla morte laſciando di ſe gran deſiderio a gli amici.——Vaſari Vita di Spinello Aretino, pag. 218. Edit. di Giunti.

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IN FIVE EPISTLES

TO THE REV^{D}. M^{R}. MASON.

WITH

NOTES.

——— *Vatibus addere calcar*
Ut ſtudio majore petant Helicona virentem. HOR.

BY WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

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EPISTLE

THE FIRST.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

Introduction.—Design of the Poem to remove prejudices which obstruct the cultivation of Epic writing.—Origin of Poetry.—Honors paid to its infancy.—Homer the first Poet remaining.—Difficulty of the question why he had no Successor in Greece.—Remark of a celebrated Writer, that as Criticism flourishes Poetry declines.—Defence of Critics.—Danger of a bigoted acquiescence in critical Systems—and of a Poet's criticising his own works.—Advantages of Friendship and Study of the higher Poets.

EPISTLE I.

PERISH that critic pride, which oft has hurl'd
Its empty thunders o'er the Epic world;
Which, eager to extend its mimic reign,
Would bind free Fancy in a ſervile chain;
With papal rage the eye of Genius blind,
And bar the gates of Glory on the mind!
Such dark decrees have letter'd Bigots penn'd *,
Yet ſeiz'd that honor'd name, the Poet's Friend.
But Learning from her page their laws will blot;
Scorn'd be their arrogance! their name forgot!
Th' indignant Bard, abhorring baſe controul,
Seeks the juſt Critic of congenial ſoul.
Say! MASON, Judge and Maſter of the Lyre!
Harmonious Chief of Britain's living Choir,

* Ver. 7. See NOTE I.

Say! wilt Thou liſten to his weaker ſtrains,
Who pants to range round Fancy's rich domains;
To vindicate her empire, and diſown
Proud Syſtem, ſeated on her injur'd throne?
Come! while thy Muſe, contented with applauſe,
Gives to her graceful ſong a little pauſe,
Enjoying triumphs paſt; at leiſure laid
In thy ſweet Garden's variegated ſhade,
Or fondly hanging on ſome favorite Oak
That Harp, whoſe notes the fate of Mona ſpoke,
Strung by the ſacred Druid's ſocial band,
And wiſely truſted to thy kindred hand!
Come! for thy liberal and ingenuous heart
Can aid a Brother in this magic art;
Let us, and Freedom be our guide, explore
The higheſt province of poetic lore,
Free the young Bard from that oppreſſive awe,
Which feels Opinion's rule as Reaſon's law,
And from his ſpirit bid vain fears depart,
Of weaken'd Nature and exhauſted Art!
Phantoms! that literary ſpleen conceives!
Dullneſs adopts, and Indolence believes!

While

While with advent'rous ſtep we wind along
Th' expanſive regions of Heroic ſong,
From different ſources let our ſearch explain
Why few the Chieftains of this wide domain.
Haply, inſpiriting poetic youth,
Our verſe may prove this animating truth,
That Poeſy's ſublime, neglected field
May ſtill new laurels to Ambition yield;
Her Epic trumpet, in a modern hand,
Still make the ſpirit glow, the heart expand.
Be ſuch our doctrine! our enlivening aim
The Muſe's honor, and our Country's fame!
Thou firſt and faireſt of the ſocial Arts!
Sovereign of liberal ſouls, and feeling hearts,
If, in devotion to thy heavenly charms,
I claſp'd thy altar with my infant arms,
For thee neglected the wide field of wealth,
The toils of int'reſt, and the ſports of health,
Enchanting Poeſy! that zeal repay
With powers to ſing thy univerſal ſway!
To trace thy progreſs from thy diſtant birth,
Heaven's pure deſcendant! dear delight of Earth!

Charm of all regions! to no age confin'd!
The prime ennobler of th' aſpiring mind!
Nor will thy dignity, ſweet Power! diſdain
What Fiction utters in her idle ſtrain,
Thy ſportive Friend! who, mocking ſolemn Truth,
Tells her fond tales of thy untutor'd youth.
As wrong'd Latona (ſo her tale begins)
To Delphos travell'd with her youthful twins;
Th' envenom'd Python, with terrific ſway,
Croſs'd the fair Goddeſs in her deſtin'd way:
The heavenly parent, in the wild alarm,
Her little Dian in her anxious arm,
High on a ſtone, which ſhe in terror trod,
Cried to her filial guard, the Archer God,
Bidding with force, that ſpoke the Mother's heart,
Her young Apollo launch his ready dart;
In meaſur'd ſounds her rapid mandate flow'd,
The firſt foundation of the future Ode!
Thus, at their banquets, fabling Greeks rehearſe *
The fancied origin of ſacred Verſe:

* Ver. 77. See NOTE II.

And

And though cold Reaſon may with ſcorn aſſail,
Or turn contemptuous from their ſimple tale,
Yet, Poeſy! thy ſiſter Art may ſtoop
From this weak ſketch to paint th' impaſſion'd group.
Though taſte refin'd to modern Verſe deny
The hacknied pageants of the Pagan ſky,
Their ſinking radiance ſtill the Canvaſs warms,
Painting ſtill glories in their graceful forms;
Nor canſt thou envy, if the world agree
To grant thy Siſter claims denied to thee;
For thee, the happier Art! the elder-born!
Superior rights and dearer charms adorn:
Confin'd ſhe catches, with obſervance keen,
Her ſingle moment of the changeful ſcene;
But thou, endu'd with energy ſublime,
Unqueſtion'd arbiter of ſpace and time!
Canſt join the diſtant, the unknown create,
And, while Exiſtence yields thee all her ſtate,
On the aſtoniſh'd mind profuſely pour
Myriads of forms, that Fancy muſt adore.
Yet of thy boundleſs power the deareſt part
Is firm poſſeſſion of the feeling Heart:

No progeny of Chance, by Labor taught,
No ſlow-form'd creature of ſcholaſtic thought,
The child of Paſſion thou! thy lyre ſhe ſtrung,
To her parental notes ſhe tun'd thy tongue;
Gave thee her boldeſt ſwell, her ſofteſt tone,
And made the compaſs of her voice thy own.
To Admiration, ſource of joy refin'd!
Chaſte, lovely mover of the ſimple mind!
To her, though ſceptics, in their pride, declaim,
With many an inſult, on her injur'd name;
To her, ſweet Poeſy! we owe thy birth,
Thou firſt encomiaſt of the fruitful Earth!
By her inſpir'd, the earlieſt mortal found
The ear-delighting charm of meaſur'd ſound;
He hail'd the Maker of a world ſo fair,
And the firſt accent of his ſong was prayer.
O, moſt attractive of thoſe airy Powers,
Who moſt illuminate Man's chequer'd hours!
Is there an Art, in all the group divine,
Whoſe dawn of Being muſt not yield to thine?
Religion's ſelf, whoſe provident controul
Takes from fierce Man his anarchy of ſoul,

She o'er thy youth with fond affection hung,
And borrow'd muſic from thy infant tongue.
Law, ſterner Law, whoſe potent voice impreſt
Severeſt terror on the human breaſt,
With thy freſh flow'rs her aweful figure crown'd,
And ſpoke her mandate in thy ſofter ſound.
E'en cold Philoſophy, whom later days
Saw thy mean rival, envious of thy praiſe;
Who clos'd againſt thee her ungrateful arms,
And urg'd her Plato to defame thy charms;
She from thy childhood gain'd no fruitleſs aid,
From thee ſhe learnt her talent to perſuade.
Gay Nature view'd thee with a ſmiling glance,
The Graces round thee fram'd the frolic dance:
And well might feſtive Joy thy favor court;
Thy ſong turn'd ſtrife to peace, and toil to ſport.
Exhauſted Vigor at thy voice reviv'd,
And Mirth from thee her deareſt charm deriv'd.
Triumphant Love, in thy alliance bleſt,
Enlarg'd his empire o'er the gentle breaſt;
His torch aſſum'd new luſtre from thy breath,
And his clear flame defied the clouds of death.

But of the ſplendid train, who felt thy ſway,
Or drew exiſtence from thy vital ray,
Glory, with fondeſt zeal, proclaim'd thy might,
And hail'd thee victor of oblivious Night.
Her martial trumpet to thy hand ſhe gave,
At once to quicken, and reward the Brave:
It ſounds—his blood the kindling Hero pays,
A cheap and ready price for thy eternal praiſe!
Tho' ſelfiſh Fear th' immortal ſtrain deride,
And mock the Warrior's wiſh as frantic pride!
  Ye gallant, hapleſs Dead of diſtant time,
Whoſe fame has periſh'd unembalm'd in rhyme,
As thro' the deſert air your aſhes fly,
In Fancy's ear the nameleſs atoms cry,
" To us, unhappy! cruel Fates refuſe
" The well-earn'd record of th' applauding Muſe."
Bleſt are thoſe Chiefs, who, blazon'd on her roll,
Still waken virtue in each kindred ſoul;
Their bright exiſtence ſtill on earth prolong,
And ſhine for ever in the deathleſs ſong.
Yet oft Oblivion, in a treacherous ſhade,
Has ſunk the tuneful rites to Valor paid;

Her

Her palſied lips refuſing to rehearſe
The ſacred, old, traditionary verſe.
As well the curious eye, with keen deſire,
Might hope to catch that ſpark of vital fire,
Which firſt thro' Chaos ſhot a ſudden light,
And quicken'd Nature in its tranſient flight;
As the fond ear to catch the fleeting note,
Which on the raviſh'd air was-heard to float,
When firſt the Muſe her Epic ſtrain began,
And every liſt'ning Chief grew more than Man.
But, as the Ruler of the new-born day
From Chaos roſe, in glory's rich array;
So from deep ſhades, impenetrably ſtrong,
That ſhroud the darken'd world of antient ſong,
Bright Homer burſts, magnificently clear,
The ſolar Lord of that poetic ſphere;
Before whoſe blaze, in wide luxuriance ſpread,
Each Grecian Star hides his diminiſh'd head;
Whoſe beams departed yet enchant the ſight,
In Latium's ſofter, chaſte, reflected light.
Say ye! whoſe curious philoſophic eye
Searches the depth where Nature's ſecrets lie;

Ye, who can tell, how her capricious fit
Directs the flow and ebb of human wit,
And why, obedient to her quick command,
Spring-tides of Genius now enrich her fav'rite land,
Now ſink, by her to different climes aſſign'd,
And only leave ſome worthleſs weeds behind!
Say! why in Greece, unrival'd and alone,
The Sovereign Poet grac'd his Epic throne?
Why did the realm that echoed his renown,
Produce no kindred heir to claim his crown?
If, as the liberal mind delights to think,
Fancy's rich flow'rs their vital eſſence drink
From Liberty's pure ſtreams, that largely roll
Their quick'ning virtue thro' the Poet's ſoul;
Why, in the period when this Friend of Earth
Made Greece the model of heroic worth,
And ſaw her votaries act, beneath her ſway,
Scenes more ſublime than Fiction can diſplay,
Why did the Epic Muſe's ſilent lyre *
Shrink from thoſe feats that ſummon'd all her fire?
Or if, as courtly Theoriſts maintain,
The Muſes revel in a Monarch's reign;

* Ver. 207. See NOTE III.

Why,

Why, when young Ammon's ſoul, athirſt for fame,
Call'd every Art to celebrate his name;
When ready Painting, at his ſovereign nod,
With aweful thunder arm'd this mimic God;
Why did coy Poeſy, tho' fondly woo'd,
Refuſe that dearer ſmile for which he ſued,
And ſee him ſhed, in martial Honor's bloom,
The tear of envy on Achilles' tomb?

In vain would Reaſon thoſe nice queſtions ſolve,
Which the fine play of mental powers involve:
In Bards of ancient time, with genius fraught,
What mind can trace how thought engender'd thought,
How little hints awak'd the large deſign,
And ſubtle Fancy ſpun her variegated line?
Yet ſober Critics, of no vulgar note,
But ſuch as Learning's ſons are proud to quote,
The progreſs of Homeric verſe explain,
As if their ſouls had lodg'd in Homer's brain.
Laughs not the ſpirit of poetic frame,
However ſlightly warm'd by Fancy's flame,
When grave Boſſu by Syſtem's ſtudied laws *
The Grecian Bard's ideal picture draws,

* Ver. 231. See NOTE IV.

And

And wiſely tells us, that his Song aroſe
As the good Parſon's quiet Sermon grows;
Who, while his eaſy thoughts no preſſure find
From hoſts of images that croud the mind,
Firſt calmly ſettles on ſome moral text,
Then creeps—from one diviſion—to the next?
Nor, if poetic minds more ſlowly drudge
Thro' the cold comments of this Gallic judge,
Will their indignant ſpirit leſs deride
That ſubtle Pedant's more preſumptive pride,
Whoſe bloated page, with arrogance replete,
Imputes to VIRGIL his own dark conceit: *
And from the tortur'd Poet dares to draw
That latent ſenſe, which HORACE never ſaw;
Which, if on ſolid proof more ſtrongly built,
Muſt brand the injur'd Bard with impious guilt.
  While ſuch Dictators their vain efforts waſte
In the dark viſions of diſtemper'd Taſte,
Let us that pleaſing, happier light purſue,
Which beams benignant from the milder few;

* Ver. 244. See NOTE V.

Who, juſtly conſcious of the doubts that ſtart
In all nice queſtions on each finer Art,
With modeſt doubt aſſign each likely cauſe,
But dare to dictate no deciſive laws!
'Tis ſaid by one, who, with this candid claim, *
Has gain'd no fading wreath of Critic fame,
Who, fondly liſt'ning to her various rhyme,
Has mark'd the Muſe's ſtep thro' many a clime;
That, where the ſettled Rules of Writing ſpread,
Where Learning's code of Critic Law is read,
Tho' other treaſures deck th' enlighten'd ſhore,
The germs of Fancy ripen there no more.
Are Critics then, that bold, imperious tribe!
The Guards of Genius, who his path preſcribe;
Are they like Viſirs in an Eaſtern court,
Who ſap the very power they ſhould ſupport?
Whoſe ſpecious wiles the royal mind unnerve,
And ſink the monarch they pretend to ſerve.
No! of their value higher far I deem;
And prize their uſeful toil with fond eſteem.

* Ver. 257. See NOTE VI.

When

When Lowth's firm ſpirit leads him to explore
The hallow'd confines of Hebraic lore,
When his free pages, luminous and bold,
The glorious end of Poeſy unfold,
Aſſert her powers, her dignity defend,
And ſpeak her, as ſhe is, fair Freedom's friend;
When thus he ſhines his mitred Peers above,
I view his warmth with reverential love;
Proud, if my verſe may catch reflected light
From the rich ſplendor of a mind ſo bright.
  Bleſt be the names, to no vain ſyſtem tied,
Who render Learning's blaze an uſeful guide,
A friendly beacon, rais'd on high to teach
The wand'ring bark to ſhun the ſhallow beach.
But O! ye noble, and aſpiring few,
Whoſe ardent ſouls poetic fame purſue,
Ye, on whom ſmiling Heaven, perfection's ſource,
Seems to beſtow unlimitable force,
The inborn vigor of your ſouls defend,
Nor lean too fondly on the firmeſt friend!
Genius may ſink on Criticiſm's breaſt,
By weak dependance on her truth oppreſt,

Sleep on her lap, and ſtretch his lifeleſs length,
Shorn by her ſoothing hand of all his ſtrength.

Thou wilt not, MASON! thou, whoſe generous heart
Muſt feel that Freedom is the ſoul of Art,
Thou wilt not hold me arrogant or vain,
If I adviſe the young poetic train
To deem infallible no Critic's word;
Not e'en the dictates of thy Attic HURD:
No! not the Stagyrite's unqueſtion'd page,
The Sire of Critics, ſanctified by age!
The nobleſt minds, with ſolid reaſon bleſt,
Who feel that faculty above the reſt,
Who argue on thoſe arts they never try,
Exalt that Reaſon they ſo oft apply,
Till in its pride, with tyrannous controul,
It cruſh the kindred talents of the ſoul;
And hence, in every Art, will ſyſtems riſe,
Which Fancy muſt ſurvey with angry eyes;
And at the lightning of her ſcornful ſmile,
In frequent ruin ſinks the labor'd pile.

How oft, my ROMNEY! have I known thy vein
Swell with indignant heat and gen'rous pain,

To hear, in terms both arrogant and tame,
Some reas'ning Pedant on thy Art declaim:
Its laws and limits when his ſovereign taſte
With firm preciſion has minutely trac'd,
And in the cloſe of a deciſive ſpeech
Pronounc'd ſome point beyond the Pencil's reach,
How has thy Genius, by one rapid ſtroke,
Refuted all the ſapient things he ſpoke!
Thy Canvaſs placing, in the cleareſt light,
His own Impoſſible before his ſight!
O might the Bard who loves thy mental fire,
Who to thy fame attun'd his early lyre,
Learn from thy Genius, when dull Fops decide,
So to refute their ſyſtematic pride!
Let him, at leaſt, ſucceeding Poets warn
To view the Pedant's lore with doubt, or ſcorn,
And e'en to queſtion, with a ſpirit free,
Eſtabliſh'd Critics of the firſt degree!
Among the names that Judgment loves to praiſe,
The pride of ancient, or of modern days;
What Laws of Poeſy can Learning ſhew
Above the Critic ſong of ſage DESPREAUX?

His

His fancy elegant, his judgment nice,
His method eaſy, and his ſtyle conciſe;
The Bard of Reaſon, with her vigor fraught,
Her pureſt doctrine he divinely taught;
Nor taught in vain! His precept clear and chaſte
Reform'd the errors of corrupted Taſte;
And French Imagination, who was bit
By that Tarantula, diſtorted Wit,
Ceaſing her antic gambols to rehearſe,
Bleſt the pure magic of his healing verſe:
With his loud fame applauding Europe rung,
And his juſt praiſe a rival Poet ſung.
Yet, had this Friend of Verſe-devoted Youth,
This tuneful Teacher of Poetic truth,
Had he but chanc'd his doctrine to diffuſe
Ere Milton commun'd with his ſacred Muſe;
And could that Engliſh, ſelf-dependant ſoul,
Born with ſuch energy as mocks controul,
Could his high ſpirit, with ſubmiſſive awe,
Have ſtoop'd to liſten to a Gallic Law;

His hallow'd ſubject, by that Law forbid *,
Might ſtill have laid in ſilent darkneſs hid,
And, this bright Sun not riſing in our ſphere,
HOMER had wanted ſtill his true compeer.
From hence let Genius to himſelf be juſt,
Hence learn, ye Bards, a liberal diſtruſt;
Whene'er 'tis ſaid, by Syſtem's haughty Son,
That what He cannot do, can ne'er be done,
'Tis Fancy's right th' exalted throne to preſs,
Whoſe height proud Syſtem can but blindly gueſs,
Springs, whoſe exiſtence ſhe denies, unlock,
And call rich torrents from the flinty rock.
Let the true Poet, who would build a name
In noble rivalſhip of antient fame,
When he would plan, to triumph over Time,
The ſplendid fabric of his lofty rhyme,
Let him the pride of Conſtantine aſſume,
Th' imperial Founder of the ſecond Rome,
Who ſcorn'd all limits to his work aſſign'd, †
Save by th' inſpiring God who rul'd his mind;

* Ver. 359. See NOTE VII.

† Ver. 377. See NOTE VIII.

Or, like the fabled * Jove, to aſcertain
The doubtful confines of his wide domain,
Two Eagles let him ſend of equal wing,
Whoſe different flight may form a perfect ring,
And, at the point where Senſe and Fancy meet,
There ſafely bold, and though ſublime diſcreet,
His fame's foundation let him firmly lay,
Nor dread the danger of diſputed ſway!
  Yet, if the Bard to glory muſt aſpire
By free exertion of unborrow'd fire,
Nor, like the Claſſic Bigot, vainly deem
No modern Muſe can challenge juſt eſteem,
Unleſs her robe in every fold be preſt
To fall preciſely like the Grecian veſt;
If the blind notion he muſt boldly ſhun,
That Beauty's countleſs forms are only one,
And not, when Fancy, from her magic hoard,
Would blindly bring him treaſures unexplor'd,

* Jupiter, ut perhibent, ſpatium quum diſcere vellet
  Naturæ, regni neſcius ipſe ſui,
 Armigeros utrimque duos æqualibus alis
  Miſit ab Eois Occiduiſque plagis.
 Parnaſſus geminos fertur junxiſſe volatus;
  Contulit alternas Pythius axis aves. CLAUDIAN.

Snap her light wand, and force her hand to bear
The heavier Compaſs, and the formal Square;
Let him no leſs their dangerous pride decline,
Who ſingly criticiſe their own deſign.
In that nice toil what various perils lurk!
Not Pride alone may mar the needful work;
But foes more common to the feeling nerve,
Where Taſte and Genius dwell with coy Reſerve,
The ſickly Doubt, with modeſt weakneſs fraught,
The languid Tedium of o'erlabour'd thought,
The Pain to feel the growing work behind
The finiſh'd model in the forming mind;
Theſe foes, that oft the Poet's boſom pierce,
Theſe! that condemn'd to fire Virgilian Verſe,
Prove that the Bard, a bold, yet trembling elf,
Should find a Critic firmer than himſelf.
But what fine Spirit will aſſume the Judge,
Patient thro' all this irkſome toil to drudge?
'Tis here, O Friendſhip! here thy glories ſhine;
The hard, th' important taſk is only thine;
For thou alone canſt all the powers unite,
That juſtly make it thy peculiar right:

Thine the fixt eye, which at no foible winks;
Thine the warm zeal, which utters all it thinks,
In thoſe ſweet tones, that haſty Spleen diſarm,
That give to painful Truth a winning charm,
And the quick hand of liſt'ning Genius teach,
To graſp that excellence he burns to reach:
Thou ſweet Subduer of all mental ſtrife!
Thou Source of vigor! thou Support of life!
Nor Art nor Science could delight or live,
Without that energy thy counſels give:
Genius himſelf muſt ſink in dumb deſpair,
Unbleſt, uncheriſh'd by thy cheering care.
  Nor let the Bard, elate with youthful fire,
When Fancy to his hand preſents the lyre,
When her ſtrong plumes his ſoaring ſpirit lift,
When Friendſhip, Heaven's more high and holy gift,
With zeal angelic prompts his daring flight,
And round him darts her doubt-diſpelling light,
Let him not then, by Vanity betray'd,
Look with unjuſt contempt on Learning's aid!
But, as th' advent'rous Seaman, to attain
That bright renown which great Diſcoverers gain,

Conſults

Conſults the conduct of each gallant name,
Who ſail'd before him in that chace of Fame,
Reviews, with frequent glance, their uſeful chart,
Marks all their aims, and fathoms all their art,
So let the Poet trace *their* happy courſe,
So bravely emulate *their* mental force,
Whoſe daring ſouls, from many a different clime,
Have nobly ventur'd on the ſea of Rhyme!
Led by no fear, his ſwelling ſail to ſlack,
Let him, with eager eyes, purſue the track;
Not like a Pirate, with inſidious views
To plunder every veſſel he purſues,
But with juſt hope to find yet farther ſhores,
And paſs each rival he almoſt adores!

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE

THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

Character of Ancient Poets—Homer—Apollonius Rhodius —Virgil—Lucan.

EPISTLE II.

HAIL, mighty Father of the Epic line,
Thou vaſt, prolific, intellectual Mine,
Where veins of ancient and of modern gold,
The wealth of each poetic world, have roll'd!
Great Bard of Greece, whoſe ever-during Verſe
All ages venerate, all tongues rehearſe;
Could blind idolatry be juſtly paid,
To aught of mental power by man diſplay'd,
To thee, thou Sire of ſoul-exalting Song,
That boundleſs worſhip might to thee belong;
For, as thy Jove, on his Olympian throne,
In his unrivall'd ſway exults alone,
Commanding Nature by his aweful nod,
In high ſecluſion from each humbler God;
So ſhines thy Genius thro' the cloud of years,
Exalted far above thy Pagan peers

By the rich ſplendor of creative fire,
And the deep thunder of thy martial lyre;
The conſcious world confeſſes thy controul,
And hails thee Sovereign of the kindling ſoul.

Yet, could thy mortal ſhape reviſit earth,
How would it move, great Bard! thy ſcornful mirth,
To hear vain Pedants to thy Verſe aſſign
Scholaſtic thoughts that never could be thine;
To hear the quaint conceits of modern Pride
Blaſpheme thy Fancy and thy Taſte deride?
When thus in Vanity's capricious fit,
We ſee thy fame traduc'd by Gallic wit, *
We ſee a Dwarf, who dares his foot to reſt
On a recumbent Giant's ample cheſt,
And, lifting his pert form to public ſight,
Boaſts, like a child, his own ſuperior height.
But neither envious Wit's malignant craft,
Tho' arm'd with Ridicule's envenom'd ſhaft,
Nor fickle Faſhion's more tyrannic ſway,
Whoſe varying voice the ſons of Earth obey,

* Ver. 28. See NOTE I.

Can ſhake the ſolid baſe of thy renown,
Or blaſt the verdure of thy Laurel crown.
Tho' Time, who from his many-colour'd wings,
Scatters ten thouſand ſhades o'er human things,
Has wrought unnumber'd changes ſince thy birth,
And given new features to the face of earth;
Tho' all thy Gods who ſhook the ſtarry pole,
Unqueſtion'd Rulers of the Pagan ſoul,
Are fallen with their fanes, in ruin hurl'd,
Their worſhip vaniſh'd from th' enlighten'd world;
Still its immortal force thy Song retains,
Still rules obedient man and fires his glowing veins;
For Nature's ſelf, that great and conſtant power,
One and the ſame thro' every changing hour,
Gave thee each ſecret of her reign to pierce,
And ſtampt her ſignet on thy ſacred Verſe;
That aweful ſignet, whoſe imperial ſway
No age diſputes, no regions diſobey;
For at its ſight the ſubject paſſions ſtart,
And open all the paſſes of the heart.

'Twas Nature taught thy Genius to diſplay
That hoſt of Characters who grace thy lay;

So richly varied and ſo vaſt the ſtore,
Her plaſtic hand can hardly model more:
'Twas Nature, nobleſt of poetic Guides,
Gave thee thy flowing Verſe, whoſe copious tides
Guſhing luxuriant from high Fancy's ſource,
By no vain art diverted in their courſe,
With ſplendid eaſe, with ſimple grandeur roll,
Spread their free wealth, and fertilize the ſoul.
There are, whom blind and erring zeal betrays
To wound thy Genius with ill-judging praiſe;
Who raſhly deem thee of all Arts the ſire,
Who draw dull ſmoke from thy reſplendent fire,
Pretend thy fancied Miracles to pierce,
And form quaint riddles of thy cleareſt Verſe;
Blind to thoſe brighter charms and purer worth,
Which make thy Lays the laſting joy of earth.
For why has every age with fond acclaim
Swell'd the loud note of thy increaſing fame?
Not that cold Study may from thee deduce
Vain codes of myſtic lore and laws abſtruſe;
But that thy Song preſents, like ſolar light,
A world in action to th' enraptur'd ſight;

That, with a force beyond th' enervate rules
Of tame Philoſophy's pedantic Schools,
Thy living Images inſtruct mankind,
Mould the juſt heart, and fire th' heroic mind.
E'en SOCRATES himſelf, that pureſt Sage, *
Imbib'd his Wiſdom from thy moral page;
And haply Greece, the Wonder of the Earth
For feats of martial fire and civic worth,
That glorious Land, of nobleſt minds the nurſe,
Owes her unrivall'd race to thy inſpiring Verſe;
For O, what Greek, who in his youthful vein
Had felt thy ſoul-invigorating ſtrain,
Who that had caught, amid the feſtive throng,
The public leſſon of thy patriot Song,
Could ever ceaſe to feel his boſom ſwell
With zeal to dare, and paſſion to excel.
In thee thy grateful country juſtly prais'd
The nobleſt Teacher of the tribes ſhe rais'd;
Thy voice, which doubly gave her fame to laſt,
Form'd future Heroes, while it ſung the paſt.
What deep regret thy fond admirers feel,
That mythologic clouds thy life conceal;

* Ver. 85. See NOTE II.

That, like a diſtant God, thou'rt darkly ſhewn,
Felt in thy Works, but in Thyſelf unknown!
Perchance the ſhades that hide thy mortal days
From keen Affection's diſappointed gaze,
And that Idolatry, ſo fondly proud,
With which thy Country to thy genius bow'd,
Might form the cauſe why, kindling with thy fire,
No Grecian rival ſtruck thy Epic lyre;
Perchance, not ſeeing how thy ſteps were train'd,
How they the ſummit of Parnaſſus gain'd,
On thy oppreſſive Glory's flaming pride
Young Emulation gaz'd, and gazing died.
The Muſes of the Attic Stage impart
To many a Votary their kindred art;
And ſhe who bids the Theban Eagle bear
Her lyric thunder thro' the ſtormy air,
How high ſoe'er ſhe leads his daring flight, *
Guides his bold rivals to an equal height.
Of all the Grecian Bards in Glory's race,
'Tis thine alone, by thy unequall'd pace,

* Ver. 119. See NOTE III.

To reach the goal with loud applauſe, and hear
No ſtep approaching thine, no rival near.
Yet may not Judgment, with ſevere diſdain,
Slight the young RHODIAN's variegated ſtrain; *
Tho' with leſs force he ſtrike an humbler ſhell,
Beneath his hand the notes of Paſſion ſwell.
His tender Genius, with alluring art,
Diſplays the tumult of the Virgin's heart,
When Love, like quivering rays that never reſt,
Darts thro' each vein, and vibrates in her breaſt.
Tho' Nature feel his Verſe, tho' ſhe declare
Medea's magic is ſtill potent there,
Yet Fancy ſees the ſlighted Poet rove
In penſive anger thro' th' Elyſian Grove.
From Critic ſhades, whoſe ſupercilious pride
His Song neglected, or his Powers decried,
He turns indignant—unoppreſt by fears,
Behold, he ſeeks the ſentence of his Peers.
See their juſt band his honeſt claim allow,
See pleaſure lighten on his laurell'd brow;

* Ver. 126. See NOTE IV.

He ſoars the Critic's cold contempt above,
For VIRGIL greets him with fraternal love!
Hail, thou rich Column, on whoſe high-wrought frame
The Roman Muſe ſupports her Epic fame!
Hail, great Magician, whoſe illuſive charms
Gave pleaſing luſtre to a Tyrant's arms,
To Jove's pure ſceptre turn'd his iron rod,
And made the Homicide a Guardian God!
Hail, wond'rous Bard, to Glory's temple led
Thro' paths that Genius rarely deigns to tread;
For Imitation, ſhe whoſe ſyren ſong
Betrays the ſkillful and unnerves the ſtrong,
Preſerving thee on her perfidious ſhore,
Where many a Poet had been wreck'd before,
Led thee to heights that charm th' aſtoniſh'd eye,
And with Invention's heaven in ſplendor vie.
As Rome herſelf, by long unwearied toil,
Glean'd the fair produce of each foreign ſoil;
From all her wide Dominion's various parts
Borrow'd their laws, their uſages, their arts;
Imported knowledge from each adverſe zone,
And made the wiſdom of the world her own:

Thy patient ſpirit thus, from every Bard
Whoſe mental riches won thy juſt regard,
Drew various treaſure; which thy ſkill refin'd,
And in the fabric of thy Verſe combin'd.
It was thy glory, as thy fond deſire,
To echo the ſweet notes of HOMER's lyre;
But with an art thy hand alone can reach,
An art that has endear'd the ſtrain of each.
So the young Nymph, whoſe tender arms embrace
An elder Siſter of enchanting grace,
Though form'd herſelf with every power to pleaſe,
By genuine character and native eaſe,
Yet fondly copies from her favourite Fair
Her mien, her motion, her attractive air,
Her robe's nice ſhape, her riband's pleaſing hue,
And every ornament that ſtrikes the view;
But ſhe diſplays, by imitative art,
So quick a ſpirit, and ſo ſoft a heart,
The graceful mimic while our eyes adore,
We think the model cannot charm us more:
Tho' ſeen together, each more lovely ſhews,
And by compariſon their beauty grows.

Some Critics, to decide which Bard prevails,
Weigh them like Jove, but not in golden ſcales;
In their falſe balance th' injur'd GREEK they raiſe,
VIRGIL ſinks loaded with their heavy praiſe. *
Ingenuous Bard, whoſe mental rays divine
Shaded by modeſt doubts more ſweetly ſhine;
Thou whoſe laſt breath, unconſcious of the wrong,
Doom'd to deſtruction thy ſublimeſt Song;
How dull their incenſe in thy ſight muſt burn,
How muſt thy ſpirit with abhorrence turn
From their diſguſting rites, who at thy ſhrine
Blaſpheme thy Maſter's name, to honor thine!
More equal tribute, in their ſimpler flowers,
The Poets offer to your ſeparate powers;
For all poetic eyes delight to view
Your different forms, and with devotion due
In each the radiant Delphic God they own,
By beauteous majeſty diſtinctly ſhewn:
But they behold the lofty HOMER ſtand
The bright Coloſſus of the Rhodian land,

* Ver. 190. See NOTE V.

Beneath

Beneath whoſe feet the waves ſubmiſſive roll,
Whoſe towering head appears to prop the pole;
Stupendous Image! grand in every part,
And ſeeming far above the reach of mortal art.
In thee, thou lovely Mantuan Bard, appear
The ſofter features of the Belvidere;
That finiſh'd grace which faſcinates all eyes,
Yet from the copying hand eluſive flies:
Charms ſo complete, by ſuch pure ſpirit warm'd,
They make leſs perfect beauty ſeem deform'd.
O had thy Muſe, whoſe decorating ſkill
Could ſpread rich foliage o'er the leafleſs hill;
Had ſhe, who knew with niceſt hand to frame
The ſweet unperiſhable wreaths of Fame;
Had ſhe, exalted by a happier fate,
Virtue's free Herald, and no Slave of State,
Deck'd worthier ſhrines with her unfading flower,
And given to Freedom what ſhe gave to Power;
Then with more keen delight and warmer praiſe
The world had liſten'd to thy bolder lays;
Perchance had ow'd to thee (a mighty debt)
Verſe where Perfection her bright ſeal had ſet,
Where Art could nothing blame and Nature nought regret.

Of

Of coarſer form, with leſs pathetic charms,
Hating with Stoic pride a Tyrant's arms,
In the keen fervor of that florid time
When youthful Fancy pours her haſty rhyme,
When all the mind's luxuriant ſhoots appear,
Untrimm'd by Art, by Intereſt, or Fear,
See daring LUCAN for that wreath contend,
Which Freedom twines for her poetic friend.
'Tis thine, thou bold but injur'd Bard, 'tis thine!
Tho' Critic ſpleen inſult thy rougher line;
Tho' wrong'd thy Genius, and thy Name miſplac'd
By vain diſtinctions of faſtidious Taſte;
Indignant Freedom, with juſt anger fir'd,
Shall guard the Poet whom herſelf inſpir'd.
What tho' thy early, uncorrected page
Betrays ſome marks of a degenerate age;
Tho' many a tumid point thy verſe contains,
Like warts projecting from Herculean veins;
Tho' like thy CATO thy ſtern Muſe appear,
Her manners rigid, and her frown auſtere;
Like him, ſtill breathing Freedom's genuine flame,
Juſtice her idol, Public Good her aim,

Well

Well ſhe ſupplies her want of ſofter art
By all the ſterling treaſures of the heart;
By Energy, from Independance caught,
And the free Vigor of unborrow'd Thought.
Thou Bard moſt injur'd by malicious fate,
Could not thy Blood appeaſe a Tyrant's hate?
Muſt He, ſtill gall'd by thy poetic claim,
With falſhood perſecute thy moral fame?
Shall Hiſtory's pen, to aid his vengeance won, *
Brand thee, brave Spirit, as an impious Son,
Who meanly fear'd to yield his vital flood,
And ſought his ſafety by a Parent's blood?
Baſe calumny, at which Belief muſt halt,
And blind Credulity herſelf revolt.
Could that firm Youth become ſo vile a ſlave,
Whoſe voice new energy to virtue gave;
Whoſe Stoic ſoul all abject thoughts abhorr'd,
And own'd no ſordid paſſion as its lord;
Who in the trying hour of mortal pain,
While life was ebbing from his open vein,
Alike unconſcious of Remorſe and Fear,
His heart unſhaken, and his ſenſes clear,

* Ver. 260. See NOTE VI.

Smil'd

Smil'd on his doom, and, like the fabled bird
Whoſe muſic on Meander's bank was heard,
Form'd into tuneful notes his parting breath,
And ſung th' approaches of undreaded death?
Riſe, thou wrong'd Bard, above Detraction's reach,
Whoſe arts in vain thy various worth impeach;
Enjoy that fame thy ſpirit knew to prize,
And view'd ſo fondly with prophetic eyes.
Tho' the nice Critic of faſtidious France
Survey thy Song with many a ſcornful glance,
And as a Goth the kinder judge accuſe,
Who with their great CORNEILLE commends thy Muſe,
Let Britain, eager as the Leſbian State
To ſhield thy Pompey from the wrongs of Fate,
To thee with pride a fond attachment ſhew,
Thou Bard of Freedom, tho' the world's thy foe.
As keenly ſenſible of Beauty's ſway,
Let our juſt iſle ſuch generous honor pay
To the fair partner of thy hapleſs life,
As Leſbos paid to Pompey's lovely Wife. *
Ye feeling Painters, who with genius warm
Delineate Virtue in her ſofteſt form,

* Ver. 293. See NOTE VII.

Let ARGENTARIA on your canvaſs ſhine, *
A graceful mourner at her Poet's ſhrine;
For, nobly fearleſs of the Tyrant's hate,
She mourns her murder'd Bard in ſolemn ſtate;
With pious care ſhe decks his ſplendid tomb,
Where the dark Cypreſs ſheds its ſoothing gloom,
There frequent takes her ſolitary ſtand,
His dear Pharſalia in her faithful hand;
That hand, whoſe toil the Muſes ſtill rehearſe,
Which fondly copied his unfiniſh'd Verſe.
See, as ſhe bends before his recent urn,
See tender Grief to Adoration turn.
O lovely Mourner, could my Song beſtow
Unfading glory on thy generous woe,
Age after age thy virtue ſhould record,
And thou ſhould'ſt live immortal as thy Lord.
Him Liberty ſhall crown with endleſs praiſe,
True to her cauſe in Rome's degenerate days;
Him, like his Brutus, her fond eye regards,
And hails him as the laſt of Roman Bards.

* Ver. 296. See NOTE VIII.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

THE THIRD.

ARGUMENT

OF THE THIRD EPISTLE.

Sketch of the Northern and the Provençal Poetry.—The moſt diſtinguiſhed Epic Poets of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and England.

EPISTLE III.

BLEST be the hand that with a generous care,
To the bright Crown which Learning loves to wear,
Reſtores the Gem, whoſe luſtre, faint and pale,
Died in the fold of dark Oblivion's veil.
Such praiſe, O MASON! to the Bard is due,
In whoſe fraternal guard thy Genius grew;
O'er whoſe untimely grave thy Lyre has paid
Its juſt devotion to a Brother's ſhade:
And thus hereafter ſhall the Britiſh Muſe,
In Memory's fane the faireſt tablet chuſe,
To bid her ſons your blended names admire,
The pride of Friendſhip's as of Fancy's choir.
Thy modeſt GRAY, ſolicitous to pierce
The dark and diſtant ſource of modern Verſe,
By ſtrings untried firſt taught his Engliſh Lyre
To reach the Gothic Harp's terrific fire:

The North's wild ſpectres own his potent hand,
And Hell's nine portals at his voice expand;
With new exiſtence by his Verſe endued,
See Gothic Fable wakes her ſhadowy brood,
Which, in the Runic rhymes of many a *Scald*,
With pleaſing dread our Northern ſires appall'd.
  Ye brave Progenitors, ye vigorous Source
Of modern Freedom and of Europe's force,
While your rude minds, athirſt for martial ſtrife,
Mock'd all the meaner arts of poliſh'd life,
The Muſe ſtill led you by her magic clue,
And from your ſavage ſtrength new vigor drew.
In War's dire field your dauntleſs Bards appear'd,
Aloft their animating harps they rear'd,
Pour'd through the charging hoſt their potent ſtrain,
And ſwell'd the fiery flood in Valor's vein.
  Souls thus inſpir'd, in every ſcene elate,
Defied the utmoſt rage of adverſe fate;
In tort'ring death the Royal Captive ſang,
And ſmiles of triumph hid his mortal pang. *

* Ver. 36. See NOTE I.

Thus

Thus to brave ODIN's Songs, our Northern ſire,
Rude, early framer of the modern Lyre,
Fierce Freedom gave an energy ſublime,
Parent and Guardian of the Gothic Rhyme.
While nurtur'd in the North's protecting arms,
The modern Muſe diſplay'd her infant charms,
Like Jove's undaunted Child her ſpirit glow'd,
And force Herculean in her cradle ſhew'd;
Her native ſcene in roughneſs ſhe ſurpaſt,
Her breath tempeſtuous as the Northern blaſt:
But, when to ſofter climes the vagrant flew,
And baſk'd beneath a ſky of azure hue;
When for her throne the flowery South ſhe choſe,
And form'd her crown of the Provençal Roſe;
Warm'd by a brighter Sun's relaxing beams,
She tun'd her alter'd voice to tender themes:
Here her gay form a gaudier dreſs aſſumes,
And ſhines in Chivalry's imperial plumes;
Her votaries wear proud Honor's myſtic glove,
And every lyre reſounds Romantic Love;
Save when, to burſt Oppreſſion's mental chain,
Keen Satire mingles with this gallant train,

Strikes Prieſtly pride with Wit's vindictive flaſh,
And galls the ghoſtly Tyrant with her laſh. *
Afraid of Poeſy's expanſive flood,
Theſe early Bards along the ſhallows ſcud
In ſome light ſkiff; for on the depths untried
No full-trimm'd veſſel floats in Epic pride.
As infants, eager for regard, abound
In ſportive efforts of uncertain ſound,
Before their little artleſs lips can reach
The harder elements of perfect ſpeech;
So the young language of each modern clime
Roſe by preluſive lays to lofty rhyme.
Thro' many an age, while, in the Convent bred,
O'er the chill'd mind ſcholaſtic darkneſs ſpread,
Thoſe keener Spirits, who from Nature caught
The warmth that kindles to Poetic thought,
Betray'd, Ambition! by thy blind deſire,
Struck with ill-fated zeal the Latian lyre, †
Tho' Diſcord's hand the jarring ſtrings had croſt,
And all the ſweetneſs of their tone was loſt.

* Ver. 60. See NOTE II.

† Ver. 76. See NOTE III.

At length, fair Italy, luxuriant land,
Where Art's rich flowers in earlieſt bloom expand,
Thy daring DANTE his wild Viſion ſung, *
And rais'd to Epic pomp his native Tongue.
Down Arno's ſtream his new-form'd muſic floats,
The proud vale echoing with his Tuſcan notes.
See the bold Bard now ſink and now aſcend,
Wherever Thought can pierce or Life extend;
In his wide circuit from Hell's drear abyſs,
Thro' purifying ſcenes to realms of perfect bliſs,
He ſeems begirt with all that airy throng,
Who brighten or debaſe the Poet's ſong.
Sublimeſt Fancy now directs his march
To opening worlds, through that infernal arch
O'er whoſe rough ſummit aweful words are read,
That freeze each entering ſoul with hopeleſs dread.
Now at her bidding his ſtrong numbers flow,
And rend the heart at Ugolino's woe;
While Nature's glory-giving tear bedews
A tale unrivall'd by the Grecian Muſe.
Now to thoſe notes that milder grief inſpire,
Pathetic Tenderneſs attunes his lyre,

* Ver. 81. See NOTE IV.

Which, ſoft as murmurs of the plaintive dove,
Tells the ſad iſſue of illicit love.
But all the worſe companions of his way
Soon into different ſounds his ductile voice betray:
Satiric Fury now appears his guide,
Thro' thorny paths of Enmity and Pride;
Now quaint Conceit his wand'ring ſteps miſleads
Thro' all the hideous forms that Folly breeds;
Now Prieſtly Dullneſs the loſt Bard enſhrouds
In cold confuſion and ſcholaſtic clouds.
Unequal Spirit! in thy various ſtrain,
With all their influence Light and Darkneſs reign;
In thy ſtrange Verſe and wayward Theme alike
New forms of Beauty and Diſorder ſtrike;
Extremes of Harmony and Diſcord dwell,
The Seraph's muſic and the Demon's yell!
The patient Reader, to thy merit juſt,
With tranſport glows, and ſhudders with diſguſt.
Thy Failings ſprung from thy diſaſtrous time;
Thy ſtronger Beauties from a ſoul ſublime,
Whoſe vigor burſt, like the volcano's flame,
From central darkneſs to the ſphere of fame.

Of gentler mind, and with a heart to feel
The fondeſt warmth of emulative zeal,
Thy feſtive Scholar, who ador'd thy Lays,
And grac'd thy Genius with no ſcanty praiſe,
The gay Boccacio, tempts th' Italian Muſe *
More varied notes and different themes to chuſe;
Themes which her voice had dar'd not yet to ſound,
Valour's heroic feats by Beauty crown'd.
Sweet was the glowing Song; but, ſtrange to tell,
On his bold lyre Oblivion's ſhadows fell;
His richer Tales engroſs'd the World's regard,
And the bright Noveliſt eclips'd the Bard.
In following ages, when Italia's ſhore
Blaz'd with the riſing light of Claſſic lore,
Stern Syſtem led, from her new-founded ſchool,
A Poet faſhion'd by her rigid rule:
Behold my Son! (his ſapient Tut'reſs cried)
Who throws the bonds of Gothic rhyme aſide;
For whom theſe hands the Grecian Lyre new ſtrung:
She ſpoke exulting, and Trissino ſung. †

* Ver. 127. See NOTE V.

† Ver. 142. See NOTE VI.

In his cold Verſe he kept her Critic laws,
While Pedants own'd their pow'r, and yawn'd applauſe.
Indignant Fancy, who with ſcorn ſurvey'd
The ſleepy honors to proud Syſtem paid,
Smiling to ſee that on her rival's brow
The Poppy lurk'd beneath the Laurel bough,
Reſolv'd in ſportive triumph to diſplay
The rich extent of her ſuperior ſway:
From Necromancy's hand, in happieſt hour,
She caught the rod of viſionary power;
And as aloft the magic wand ſhe rais'd,
A peerleſs Bard with new effulgence blaz'd,
Born every law of Syſtem to diſown,
And rule by Fancy's boundleſs power alone.
High in mid air, between the Moon and Earth,
The Bard of Pathos now, and now of Mirth,
Pois'd with his lyre between a Griffin's wings,
Her ſportive darling, ARIOSTO, ſings.
As the light cloud, whoſe varying vapors fly,
Driven by the zephyr of the evening ſky,
Fixes and charms the never-wearied view,
By taking every ſhape and every hue;

So,

So, by Variety's ſupreme controul,
His changeful numbers ſeize the willing ſoul.
Enchanted by his Song, Attention ſits,
With features catching every caſt by fits,
Like the fond infant, in whoſe tender brain
Young Senſibility delights to reign;
While rapid Joy and Pain each other chaſe
Thro' the ſoft muſcles of its April face.
In vain the ſlaves of Syſtem would diſcard
From Glory's claſſic train this airy Bard;
Delighted Nature her gay fav'rite crown'd,
And Envy's clamour in her plaudit drown'd.
Severe Morality, to cenſure mov'd,
His wanton Lyre with juſter blame reprov'd;
But his ſweet Song her anger ſo beguil'd,
That, ere ſhe finiſh'd her reproof, ſhe ſmil'd.
Of chaſter fire, a rival name ſucceeds,
Whoſe bold and glowing hand Religion leads:
In ſolemn accent, and in ſacred ſtate,
With claſſic lore and Chriſtian zeal elate,
Sweetly pathetic, and ſublimely ſtrong,
Tasso begins his more majeſtic ſong;

The Muſe of Sion, not implor'd in vain,
Guides to th' impaſſion'd ſoul his heavenly ſtrain.
Bluſh, BOILEAU, bluſh, and for that pride atone,
Which ſlander'd Genius far above thy own;
And thou, great injur'd Bard, thy ſtation claim
Amid the Demi-gods of Epic name;
Heir to a mantle by the Muſes ſpun,
Of a poetic Sire the more poetic Son. *
Nor, tho' juſt Fame her richer palm devote
To the high-ſounding lyre of ſerious note,
Shall gay TASSONI want his feſtive crown, †
Who baniſh'd from the Muſe her aweful frown,
And, tuning to light themes her lofty ſtyle,
O'er her grave features ſpread a comic ſmile.
Such various Sons, of Epic fire poſſeſt,
Italia foſter'd on her feeling breaſt.
Spain, whoſe bold genius with misjudging pride
O'erſteps true glory by too large a ſtride,
Claims higher merit from one Poet's birth,
Who rivals all the different Bards of earth:

* Ver. 194. See NOTE VII.
† Ver. 197. See NOTE VIII.

With

With more than Niobe's parental boaſt,
She calls her ſingle Son himſelf an Hoſt,
And raſhly judges that her VEGA's lyre *
Is equal to the whole Aonian quire.
Impetuous Poet! whoſe full brain ſupplied
Such floods of Verſe, and in ſo quick a tide,
Their rapid ſwell, by its unrivall'd height,
Pleas'd, yet produc'd more wonder than delight:
Tho' thy free rhyme from Fancy's fountain guſh,
And with the grandeur of the torrent ruſh,
Its troubled ſtreams in dark diſorder roam,
With all the torrent's noiſe and all its foam.
To Emulation fir'd by TASSO's ſtrain,
Thy ſpirit quitted the dramatic plain
To ſeek thoſe Epic heights, ſublimely calm,
Whence he had pluck'd his Idumean palm;
But, vainly ſtruggling in a taſk too hard,
Sunk at the feet of that ſuperior Bard.
Brave Spaniard! ſtill thy wounded pride conſole;
Time ſhall not ſtrike thy name from Glory's roll,

* Ver. 209. See NOTE IX.

On

On which thy generous and fraternal hand
Emblaz'd each brother of thy tuneful band;
Thy Muſe ſhall ſhare the praiſe ſhe joy'd to give,
And while thy language laſts thy fame ſhall live.
Perchance, tho' ſtrange the paradox may ſeem,
That fame had riſen with a brighter beam,
Had radiant Fancy leſs enrich'd thy mind:
Her laviſh wealth, for wiſer uſe deſign'd,
Ruin'd the Poet by its ſplendid lure,
As India's mines have made his country poor.
With warmth more temperate, and in notes more clear,
That with Homeric richneſs fill the ear,
The brave ERCILLA ſounds, with potent breath, *
His Epic trumpet in the fields of death.
In ſcenes of ſavage war when Spain unfurl'd
Her bloody banners o'er the weſtern world,
With all his Country's virtues in his frame,
Without the baſe alloy that ſtain'd her name,
In Danger's camp this military Bard,
Whom Cynthia ſaw on his nocturnal guard,

* Ver. 239. See NOTE X.

Recorded, in his bold deſcriptive lay,
The various fortune of the finiſh'd day;
Seizing the pen while Night's calm hours afford
A tranſient ſlumber to his ſatiate ſword,
With noble juſtice his warm hand beſtows
The meed of Honor on his valiant foes.
Howe'er precluded, by his generous aim,
From high pretenſions to inventive fame,
His ſtrongly-colour'd ſcenes of ſanguine ſtrife,
His ſofter pictures caught from Indian life,
Above the viſionary forms of art,
Fire the awaken'd mind and melt the heart.
  Tho' fierceſt tribes her galling fetters drag,
Proud Spain muſt ſtrike to Luſitania's flag,
Whoſe ampler folds, in conſcious triumph ſpread,
Wave o'er her NAVAL POET's laureate head.
Ye Nymphs of Tagus, from your golden cell,
That caught the echo of his tuneful ſhell,
Riſe, and to deck your darling's ſhrine provide
The richeſt treaſures that the deep may hide:
From every land let grateful Commerce ſhower
Her tribute to the Bard who ſung her power;

As thoſe rich gales, from whence his GAMA caught
A pleaſing earneſt of the prize he ſought,
The balmy fragrance of the Eaſt diſpenſe,
So ſteals his Song on the delighted ſenſe,
Aſtoniſhing, with ſweets unknown before,
Thoſe who ne'er taſted but of claſſic lore.
Immortal Bard, thy name with GAMA vies,
Thou, like thy Hero, with propitious ſkies
The ſail of bold adventure haſt unfurl'd,
And in the Epic ocean found a world.
'Twas thine to blend the Eagle and the Dove,
At once the Bard of Glory and of Love: *
Thy thankleſs Country heard thy varying lyre
To PETRARCH's Softneſs melt, and ſwell to HOMER's Fire!
Boaſt and lament, ungrateful land, a Name,
In life, in death, thy honor and thy ſhame.
Thou nobler realm, whom vanity betrays
To load thy letter'd ſons with laviſh praiſe;
Where Eulogy, with one eternal ſmile, †
Heaps her faint roſes in a withering pile:

* Ver. 280. See NOTE XI.
† Ver. 287. See NOTE XII.

A City

A City milk-maid, on the firſt of May,
Who, pertly civil, and abſurdly gay,
Forms her dull garland in fantaſtic ſtate,
With ill-adjuſted flow'rs and borrow'd plate.
Canſt thou, ſelf-flattering France, with juſtice vaunt
One Epic laurel as thy native plant?
How oft a Gallic hand, with childiſh fire,
Has rattled Diſcord on th' heroic lyre,
While their dull aid aſſociate Critics bring,
And vainly teach the uſe of every ſtring!
In Morals, as, with many an empty boaſt,
They practiſe virtue leaſt who preach it moſt;
So, haughty Gallia, in thy Epic ſchool,
No great Examples riſe, but many a Rule.*
Yet, tho' unjuſt to Tasso's nobler lays,
Keen Boileau ſhall not want his proper praiſe; †
He, archly waving his ſatiric rod
Thro' the new path which firſt Tassoni trod,
Purſued his ſportive march in happy hour,
And pluck'd from Satire's thorn a feſtive flower.

* Ver. 302. See NOTE XIII.

† Ver. 304. See NOTE XIV.

His ſacerdotal War ſhall wake delight,
And ſmiles in Gravity herſelf excite,
While Canons live to quarrel or to feaſt,
And gall can tinge the ſpirit of a Prieſt.

Nor, gentle GRESSET, ſhall thy ſprightly rhyme *
Ceaſe to enchant the liſt'ning ear of Time:
In thee the Graces all their powers inſtill,
To touch the Epic chords with playful ſkill.
The hapleſs Parrot whom thy lays endear,
In piety and woe the Trojan's peer;
His heart as tender, and his love more pure,
Shall, like Æneas, live of fame ſecure;
While female hands, with many a tender word,
Stroke the ſoft feathers of their fav'rite bird.

Yet not in childiſh ſport, or trifling joy,
Do Gallic Fair-ones all their hours employ:
See lovely BOCCAGE, in ambition ſtrong, †
Build, with aſpiring aim, her Epic Song!
By Glory fir'd, her roſy lips rehearſe
Thy feats, Columbus, in unborrow'd Verſe.

* Ver. 313. See NOTE XV.

† Ver. 325. See NOTE XVI.

If

If this new Muſe in War's dire field diſplays
No Grecian ſplendor, no Homeric blaze,
Attractive ſtill, tho' not in pomp array'd,
She charms like Zama, in her Verſe portray'd;
Whoſe form from dreſs no gorgeous pride aſſumes,
Clad in a ſimple zone of azure plumes.
England's dear gueſt! this Muſe of Gallia caught
From our inſpiring Iſle her ardent thought;
Here firſt ſhe ſtrove to reach, with vent'rous hope,
MILTON's chaſte grandeur, and the grace of POPE;
And ſweetly taught, in her mimetic ſtrain,
The Songs of Britain to the Banks of Seine.
But ſee! with wounded Pride's indignant glance,
The angry Genius of preſuming France
From ancient ſhrines their Epic wreaths would tear,
To ſwell the glory of her great VOLTAIRE. *
O, form'd in Learning's various paths to ſhine,
Encircled from thy birth by all the Nine,
On thee, bleſt Bard, theſe rivals ſeem'd to ſhower
Their various attributes and blended power!

* Ver. 344. See NOTE XVII.

But, when their lofty leader bade thee frame
The rich Heroic ſong on Henry's fame,
Sarcaſtic Humour, trifling with her lyre,
Took from th' inſpiring Muſe her ſolemn fire.
No more her ſpirit like the Eagle ſprings,
Or rides the buoyant air with balanc'd wings:
Tho' rapid ſtill, to narrow circuits bound,
She, like the darting Swallow, ſkims the ground.
Thy Verſe diſplays, beneath an Epic name,
Wit's flinty Spark, for Fancy's ſolar Flame.
While yet thy hand the Epic chords embrac'd,
With playful ſpirit, and with frolic haſte,
Such lively ſounds thy rapid fingers drew,
And thro' the feſtive notes ſo lightly flew,
Nature and Fancy join'd their charms to ſwell,
And laughing Humour crown'd thy new Pucelle:
But the chaſte Muſes, ſtartled at the ſound,
Amid thy ſprightly numbers bluſh'd and frown'd;
With decent anger, and becoming pride,
Severer Virtue threw the Song aſide;
While Juſtice own'd it, with a kinder glance,
The wittieſt Levity of wanton France.

Now, graver Britain, amiably ſevere,
To thee, with native zeal, to thee I ſteer;
My vent'rous bark, its foreign circuit o'er,
Exulting ſprings to thy parental ſhore.
Thou gorgeous Queen, who on thy ſilvery coaſt,
Sitteſt encircled by a filial hoſt,
And ſeeſt thy ſons, the jewels of thy crown,
Blaze with each varying ray of rich renown;
If with juſt love I hold their Genius dear,
Lament their hardſhips, and their fame revere,
O bid thy Epic Muſe, with honor due,
Range her departed Champions in my view!
See, on a party-colour'd ſteed of fire,
With Humour at his ſide, his truſty Squire,
Gay CHAUCER leads—in form a Knight of old,
And his ſtrong armour is of ſteel and gold;
But o'er it age a cruel ruſt has ſpread,
And made the brilliant metals dark as lead.
Now gentle SPENSER, Fancy's fav'rite Bard,
Awakes my wonder and my fond regard;
Encircling Fairies bear, in ſportive dance,
His adamantine ſhield and magic lance;

While Allegory, dreſt with myſtic art,
Appears his Guide; but, promiſing to dart
A lambent glory round her liſt'ning Son,
She hides him in the web herſelf has ſpun.
  Ingenuous Cowley, the fond dupe of Wit,
Seems like a vapour o'er the field to flit;
In David's praiſe he ſtrikes ſome Epic notes,
But ſoon down Lethe's ſtream their dying murmur floats.
  While Cowley vaniſh'd in an amorous riddle,
Up roſe the frolic Bard of Bear and Fiddle:
His ſmile exhilarates the ſullen earth,
Adorning Satire in the maſk of Mirth:
Taught by his Song, Fanatics ceaſe their jars,
And wiſe Aſtrologers renounce the Stars.
Unrivall'd Butler! bleſt with happy ſkill
To heal by comic verſe each ſerious ill,
By Wit's ſtrong flaſhes Reaſon's light diſpenſe,
And laugh a frantic nation into ſenſe!
  Apart, and on a ſacred hill retir'd,
Beyond all mortal inſpiration fir'd,
The mighty Milton ſits—an hoſt around
Of liſt'ning Angels guard the holy ground;

Amaz'd

Amaz'd they ſee a human form aſpire
To graſp with daring hand a Seraph's lyre,
Inly irradiate with celeſtial beams,
Attempt thoſe high, thoſe ſoul-ſubduing themes,
(Which humbler Denizens of Heaven decline)
And celebrate, with ſanctity divine,
The ſtarry field from warring Angels won,
And GOD triumphant in his Victor Son.
Nor leſs the wonder, and the ſweet delight,
His milder ſcenes and ſofter notes excite,
When at his bidding Eden's blooming grove
Breathes the rich ſweets of Innocence and Love.
With ſuch pure joy as our Forefather knew
When Raphael, heavenly gueſt, firſt met his view,
And our glad Sire, within his bliſsful bower,
Drank the pure converſe of th' ætherial Power,
Round the bleſt Bard his raptur'd audience throng,
And feel their ſouls imparadis'd in ſong.
  Of humbler mien, but not of mortal race,
Ill-fated DRYDEN, with Imperial grace,
Gives to th' obedient lyre his rapid laws;
Tones yet unheard, with touch divine, he draws,

The melting fall, the riſing ſwell ſublime,
And all the magic of melodious rhyme.
See with proud joy Imagination ſpread
A wreath of honor round his aged head!
But two baſe Spectres, tho' of different hue,
The Bard unhappy in his march purſue;
Two vile diſgraceful Fiends, of race accurſt,
Conceiv'd by Spleen, by meagre Famine nurſt,
Malignant Satire, mercenary Praiſe,
Shed their dark ſpots on his immortal bays.
Poor DAVENANT march'd before, with nobler aim,
His keen eye fixt upon the palm of Fame,
But cruel Fortune doom'd him to rehearſe
A Theme ill-choſen, in ill-choſen Verſe.
Next came Sir RICHARD, but in woeful plight,
DRYDEN's Led-horſe firſt threw the luckleſs Knight.
He roſe advent'rous ſtill—O who may count
How oft he tried a different Steed to mount!
Each angry ſteed his awkward rider flung;
Undaunted ſtill he fell, and falling ſung.
But Æſculapius, who, with grief diſtreſt,
Beheld his offspring made a public jeſt,

Soon

Soon bade a livelier Son with mirth efface
The ſhame he ſuffer'd from Sir RICHARD's caſe.
Swift at the word his ſprightly GARTH began
To make an * helmet of a Cloſe-ſtool Pan;
An Urinal he for his trumpet takes,
And at each blaſt he blows ſee Laughter ſhakes.
Yet peace—new muſic floats on Æther's wings;
Say, is it Harmony herſelf who ſings?
No! while enraptur'd Sylphs the Song inſpire,
'Tis POPE who ſweetly wakes the ſilver lyre.
To melting notes, more muſically clear
Than Ariel whiſper'd in Belinda's ear.
Too ſoon he quits them for a ſharper tone;
See him, tho' form'd to fill the Epic throne,
Decline the ſceptre of that wide domain,
To bear a Lictor's rod in Satire's train;
And, ſhrouded in a miſt of moral ſpleen, †
Behold him cloſe the viſionary ſcene!

* And his high helmet was a Cloſe-ſtool Pan. DISPENSARY.

† Ver. 475. See NOTE XVIII.

END OF THE THIRD EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

THE FOURTH.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

Remarks on the ſuppoſed Parſimony of Nature in beſtowing Poetic Genius.—The Evils and the Advantages of Poetry exemplified in the Fate of different Poets.

EPISTLE IV.

SAY, generous Power, benignant Nature, ſay,
Who temp'reſt with thy touch our human clay,
Warming the fields of Thought with genial care,
The various fruits of mental growth to bear;
Shall not thy vot'ries glow with juſt diſdain,
When Sloth or Spleen thy bounteous hand arraign?
Art thou the Niggard they pretend thou art,
A grudging Parent with a Stepdame's heart;
And doſt thou ſhed, with rare, reluctant toil,
Bright Fancy's germins in the mental ſoil?
Is Genius, thy ſweet Plant of richeſt power,
Whoſe dearly priz'd and long-expected flower
More tardy than the Aloe's bloom appears,
Ordain'd to blow but in a thouſand years?
Periſh the ſickly thought—let thoſe who hold
Thy quick'ning influence ſo coy, ſo cold,

Calmly the habitable earth ſurvey,
From time's firſt æra to the paſſing day;
In what rude clime, beneath what angry ſkies,
Have plants Poetic never dar'd to riſe?
In torrid regions, where 'tis toil to think,
Where ſouls in ſtupid eaſe ſupinely ſink;
And where the native of the deſert drear
Yields to blank darkneſs half his icy year;
In theſe unfriendly ſcenes, where each extreme
Of heat and cold forbids the mind to teem,
Poetic bloſſoms into Being ſtart,
Spontaneous produce of the feeling heart.
  Can we then deem that in thoſe happier lands,
Where every vital energy expands;
Where Thought, the golden harveſt of the mind,
Springs into rich luxuriance, unconfin'd;
That in ſuch ſoils, with mental weeds o'ergrown,
The Seeds of Poeſy were thinly ſown?
  Shall we deny the labor of the ſwain,
Who to the cultur'd earth confides the grain,
If all the vagrant harpies of the air
From its new bed the pregnant treaſure tear;

If, when ſcarce riſing, with a ſtem infirm,
It dies the victim of the mining worm;
If mildew, riding in the eaſtern guſt,
Turns all its ripening gold to ſable duſt?
Theſe foes combin'd (and with them who may cope?)
Are not more hoſtile to the Farmer's hope,
Than Life's keen paſſions to that lighter grain
Of Fancy, ſcatter'd o'er the infant brain.
Pleaſure, the rambling Bird! the painted Jay!
May ſnatch the richeſt ſeeds of Verſe away;
Or Indolence, the worm that winds with art
Thro' the cloſe texture of the cleaneſt heart,
May, if they haply have begun to ſhoot,
With partial miſchief wound the ſick'ning root;
Or Avarice, the mildew of the ſoul,
May ſweep the mental field and blight the whole;
Nay, the meek errors of the modeſt mind,
To its own vigor diffidently blind,
And that cold ſpleen, which falſely has declar'd
The powers of Nature and of Art impair'd,
The gate that Genius has unclos'd may guard,
And rivet to the earth the riſing Bard:

For who will quit, tho' from mean aims exempt,
The cares that ſummon, and the joys that tempt,
In many a lonely ſtudious hour to try
Where latent ſprings of Poeſy may lie;
Who will from ſocial eaſe his mind divorce,
To prove in Art's wide field its ſecret force,
If, blind to Nature's frank parental love,
He deems that Verſe, deſcended from above,
Like Heaven's more ſacred ſigns, whoſe time is o'er,
A gift miraculous, conferr'd no more?

O Prejudice! thou bane of Arts, thou peſt,
Whoſe ruffian powers the free-born ſoul arreſt;
Thou who, dethroning Reaſon, dar'ſt to frame
And iſſue thy proud laws beneath her name;
Thou Coaſter on the intellectual deep,
Ordering each timid bark thy courſe to keep;
Who, leſt ſome daring mind beyond thee ſteer,
Haſt rais'd, to vouch thy vanity and fear,
Herculean pillars where thy ſail was furl'd,
And nam'd thy bounds the Limits of the World:
Thou braggart, Prejudice, how oft thy breath
Has doom'd young Genius to the ſhades of death!

How

How often has thy voice, with brutal fire
Forbidding Female hands to touch the lyre,
Deny'd to Woman, Nature's fav'rite child,
The right to enter Fancy's opening wild!
Bleſt be this ſmiling hour, when Britain ſees
Her Fair-ones cancel ſuch abſurd decrees,
In one harmonious group, with graceful ſcorn,
Spring o'er the Pedant's fence of wither'd thorn,
And reach Parnaſſian heights, where, laurel-crown'd,
This ſofter Quire the notes of triumph ſound;
Where SEWARD, leader of the lovely train,
Pours o'er heroic tombs her potent ſtrain;
Potent to ſooth the honor'd dead, and dart
Congenial virtue thro' each panting heart;
Potent thro' ſpirits maſculine to ſpread
Poetic jealouſy and envious dread;
If Love and Envy could in union reſt,
And rule with blended ſway a Poet's breaſt;
The Bards of Britain, with unjaundic'd eyes,
Will glory to behold ſuch rivals riſe.
Proceed, ye Siſters of the tuneful Shell, *
Without a ſcruple, in that Art excel,

* Ver. 103. See NOTE I.

Which reigns, by virtuous Pleaſure's ſoft controul,
In ſweet accordance with the Female ſoul;
Pure as yourſelves, and like your charms deſign'd
To bleſs the earth, and humanize mankind.

Where'er that Parent of engaging thought,
Warm Senſibility, like light, has taught
The bright'ning mirror of the mind to ſhew
Nature's reflected forms in all their glow;
Where in full tides the fine affections roll,
And the warm heart invigorates the ſoul;
In that rich ſpot, where winds propitious blow,
Culture may teach poetic Fame to grow.
Refin'd Invention and harmonious Rhyme,
Are the ſlow gifts of Study and of Time;
But to the Bard whom all the Muſes court,
His Sports are ſtudy, and his Studies ſport.
E'en at this period, when all tongues declare
Poetic talents are a gift moſt rare,
Unnumber'd Spirits, in our generous iſle,
Are ripening now beneath kind Nature's ſmile,
Whom happy care might lead to laſting fame,
And art ennoble with a Poet's name.

Not

Not that 'tis granted this high prize to gain
By light effuſions of a ſportive vein,
The idle Ballad of a ſummer's morn,
The child of Frolic, in a moment born:
Who views ſuch trifles with a vain regard,
But ill deſerves the mighty name of Bard;
In diff'rent tints ſee virtuous GRESSET trace
The genuine ſpirit of Poetic race:

* Let the true Bard (this pleaſing Poet ſings)
Bid his fair fame on ſtrong foundations reſt;
His be each honour that from Genius ſprings,
Eſteem'd by Judgment, and by Love careſt;
His the Ambition, that in climes unknown,
Where'er his wand'ring volume may extend,
Where'er that Picture of his mind is ſhewn,
In every Reader he may find a Friend.

" Be

* Je veux qu'épris d'un nom plus légitime,
Que non content de ſe voir eſtimé,
Par ſon Genie un Amant de la rime
Emporte encor le plaiſir d'etre aimé;
Qu'aux régions à lui meme inconnues
Ou voleront ſes gracieux ecrits,
A ce tableau de ſes mœurs ingénues,
Tous ſes Lecteurs deviennent ſes Amis:

Que

Be it his aim to dart the living ray
Of pureſt pleaſure o'er th' enlighten'd earth ;
And in ſweet union let his works diſplay
The Poet's fancy and the Patriot's worth.

Thus far, O GRESSET, on theſe points agreed,
My ſoul profeſſes thy Poetic Creed ;
Tho' the ſoft languor of thy ſong I blame,
Which preſent eaſe prefers to future fame,
Thy nobler maxims I with pride embrace,
That Verſe ſhou'd ever riſe on Virtue's baſe,
And every maſter of this matchleſs art
Exalt the Spirit, and improve the Heart ;
And many a Youth, now riſing into Man,
Might build his glory on this noble plan,
With latent powers to make the ſtructure laſt
Till Nature dies, and Time itſelf be paſt :
But O, how intricate the chances lurk,
Whoſe power may drive him from the doubtful work!
Of the ſtrong minds by chaſte Ambition nurſt,
Who burn to rank in Honor's line the firſt,

Que diſſipant le préjugé vulgaire,
Il montre enfin que ſans crime on peut plaire,
Et reunir, par un heureux lien,
L' Auteur charmant et le vrai Citoyen.

One

One leaves the Lyre to ſeize the martial crown,
And one may drop it at a Parent's frown;
For ſtill with ſcorn, which anxious fear inflames,
Parental care 'gainſt Poeſy declaims!
" Fly, fly, my ſon, (the fond adviſer cries)
" That thorny path, where every peril lies;
" Oh! be not thou by that vain Art betray'd,
" Whoſe pains are Subſtance, and whoſe joys are Shade!
" Mark, in the Muſes' miſerable throng,
" What air-built viſions cheat the Sons of Song!
" This is a leſſon taught in every ſtreet,
" And Bards may read it at each Stall they meet:
" Take the firſt book, behold in many a page
" What promiſes of life from age to age;
" The Poet ſwears himſelf he ne'er ſhall die,
" A troop of rhyming friends ſupport the lie:
" Yet ſee how ſoon in Lethe's ſtream expire
" This leading Bard and his attendant Quire,
" And round theſe boards, their unexpected bier,
" Their ghoſts breathe wiſdom in the paſſing ear:
" For Stalls, like Church-yards, moral truth ſupply,
" And teach the viſionary Bard to die.

" If

" If preſent fame, thy airy hope, be gain'd,
" By vigils purchas'd, and by toil maintain'd,
" What baſe alloy muſt ſink the doubtful prize,
" Which Envy poiſons, and which Spleen denies!
" Obſerve what ills the living Bard attend,
" Neglect his lot, and Penury his end!
" Behold the world unequally requite.
" Two Arts that miniſter to chaſte delight,
" Twin-ſiſters, who with kindred beauty ſtrike
" In fortune different, as in charms alike:
" PAINTING, fair Danae! has her Golden ſhower,
" But Want is POESY's proverbial dower.
" See, while with brilliant genius, ill applied,
" The noble RUBENS flatters Royal pride,
" Makes all the Virtues, who abjur'd him, wait
" On abject JAMES, in allegoric ſtate;
" O'er the baſe Pedant his rich radiance flings,
" And deifies the meaneſt of our Kings;
" His Son rewards, and Honor owns the deed,
" The ſplendid Artiſt with a princely meed.
" Now turn to MILTON's latter days, and ſee
" How Bards and Painters in their fate agree;

" Behold him ſell his heaven-illumin'd page,
" Mirac'lous child of his deſerted age,
" For ſuch a pittance, ſo ignobly ſlight,
" As wounded Learning bluſhes to recite! *
" If changing times ſuggeſt the pleaſing hope,
" That Bards no more with adverſe fortune cope;
" That in this alter'd clime, where Arts increaſe,
" And make our poliſh'd Iſle a ſecond Greece;
" That now, if Poeſy proclaims her Son,
" And challenges the wreath by Fancy won;
" Both Fame and Wealth adopt him as their heir,
" And liberal Grandeur makes his life her care;
" From ſuch vain thoughts thy erring mind defend,
" And look on CHATTERTON's diſaſtrous end.
" Oh, ill-ſtarr'd Youth, whom Nature form'd, in vain,
" With powers on Pindus' ſplendid height to reign!
" O dread example of what pangs await
" Young Genius ſtruggling with malignant fate!
" What could the Muſe, who fir'd thy infant frame
" With the rich promiſe of Poetic fame;

* Ver. 210. See NOTE II.

" Who taught thy hand its magic art to hide,
" And mock the inſolence of Critic pride ;
" What cou'd her unavailing cares oppoſe,
" To ſave her darling from his deſperate foes ;
" From preſſing Want's calamitous controul,
" And Pride, the fever of the ardent ſoul ?
" Ah, ſee, too conſcious of her failing power,
" She quits her Nurſling in his deathful hour !
" In a chill room, within whoſe wretched wall
" No cheering voice replies to Miſery's call ;
" Near a vile bed, too crazy to ſuſtain
" Misfortune's waſted limbs, convuls'd with pain,
" On the bare floor, with heaven-directed eyes,
" The hapleſs Youth in ſpeechleſs horror lies !
" The pois'nous vial, by diſtraction drain'd,
" Rolls from his hand, in wild contortion ſtrain'd :
" Pale with life-waſting pangs, it's dire effect,
" And ſtung to madneſs by the world's neglect,
" He, in abhorrence of the dangerous Art,
" Once the dear idol of his glowing heart,
" Tears from his Harp the vain deteſted wires,
" And in the frenzy of Deſpair expires !

" Pernicious Poesy! thy baleful sway
" Exalts to weaken, flatters to betray;
" When thy fond Votary has to thee resign'd
" The captive powers of his deluded mind,
" Fantastic hopes his swelling breast inflame,
" Tempestous passions tear his shatter'd frame,
" Which sinks; for round it seas of trouble roar,
" Admitting agony at every pore;
" While Dullness, whom no tender feelings check,
" Grins at his ruin, and enjoys the wreck;
" Seen thro' the mist which clouds her heavy eyes,
" The faults of Genius swell to double size,
" His generous faults, which her base pride makes known,
" Insulting errors so unlike her own.
" Far then, my Son, far from this Syren steer;
" Or, if her dulcet song must charm thy ear,
" Let Reason bind thee, like the Greek of yore,
" To catch her music, but escape her shore;
" For never shall the wretch her power can seize,
" Regain the port of Fortune, or of Ease."
Parental Fear thus warns the filial heart,
From this alluring, this insidious Art;

But, wounded thus by keen Invective's edge,
Say, can the Muſe no juſt defence alledge?
In ſtriking contraſt has ſhe not to paint
Her proſp'rous Hero, as her murder'd Saint?
'Tis true, ſhe oft has fruitleſs vigils kept,
And oft, with unavailing ſorrow, wept
Her injur'd Vot'ries, doom'd to quit the earth
In the ſharp pangs of ill-requited worth.
Ye noble Martyrs of poetic name,
" Bliſs to your Spirits, to your Mem'ries Fame!"
By gen'rous Honor be your toils rever'd,
To grateful Nature be your names endear'd!
To all who Pity's feeling nerve poſſeſs,
Doubly endear'd by undeſerv'd diſtreſs.
But, to relieve the pain your wrongs awake,
O let the Muſe her brighter records take,
Review the crown by living Merit won,
And ſhare the triumph of each happier Son.
If the young Bard who ſtarts for Glory's goal,
Can fate with preſent fame his ardent ſoul,
Poetic ſtory can with truth atteſt
This rareſt, richeſt prize in life poſſeſt.

See the GAY POET of Italia's ſhore,
Whom with fond zeal her feeling ſons adore,
Paſs, while his heart with exultation beats,
Poetic Mantua's applauding ſtreets!
See him, while Juſtice ſmiles, and Envy ſnarls,
Receive the Laurel from Imperial Charles! *
And lo, th' unfading Gift ſtill ſhines above
Each periſhable mark of Royal Love.

If humbler views the tuneful mind inflame,
If to be rich can be a Poet's aim,
The Muſe may ſhew, but in a different clime,
Wealth, the fair produce of applauded Rhyme.
Behold the fav'rite Bard of lib'ral Spain,
Her wond'rous VEGA, of exhauſtleſs vein;
From honeſt Poverty, his early lot,
With honor ſullied by no vicious blot,
Behold him riſe on Fortune's glittering wings,
And almoſt reach the opulence of Kings;
The high-ſoul'd Nobles of his native land,
Enrich their Poet with ſo frank a hand!

* Ver. 298. See NOTE III.

For him Pieria's rock with treaſure teems,
For him her fountains guſh with golden ſtreams; *
And ne'er did Fortune, with a love more juſt,
Her ſplendid ſtores to worthier hands entruſt;
For with the pureſt current, wide and ſtrong,
His Charity ſurpaſt his copious Song.
If the Enthuſiaſt higher hope purſues,
If from his commerce with th' inſpiring Muſe
He ſeeks to gain, by no mean aims confin'd,
Freedom of thought and energy of mind;
To raiſe his ſpirit, with ætherial fire,
Above each little want and low deſire;
O turn where MILTON flames with Epic rage,
Unhurt by poverty, unchill'd by age:
Tho' danger threaten his declining day,
Tho' clouds of darkneſs quench his viſual ray,
The heavenly Muſe his hallow'd ſpirit fills
With raptures that ſurmount his matchleſs ills;
From earth ſhe bears him to bright Fancy's goal,
And diſtant fame illuminates his ſoul!
Too oft the wealthy, to proud follies born,
Have turn'd from letter'd Poverty with ſcorn.

* Ver. 314. See NOTE IV.

Dull

Dull Opulence! thy narrow joys enlarge;
To ſhield weak Merit is thy nobleſt charge:
Search the dark ſcenes where drooping Genius lies,
And keep from ſorrieſt ſights a nation's eyes,
That, from expiring Want's reproaches free,
Our generous country may ne'er weep to ſee
A future CHATTERTON by poiſon dead,
An OTWAY fainting for a little bread.
If deaths like theſe deform'd our native iſle,
Some Engliſh Bards have baſk'd in Fortune's ſmile.
Alike in Station and in Genius bleſt,
By Knowledge prais'd, by Dignity careſt,
POPE's happy Freedom, all baſe wants above,
Flow'd from the golden ſtream of Public Love;
That richeſt antidote the Bard can ſeize,
To ſave his ſpirit from its worſt diſeaſe,
From mean Dependance, bright Ambition's bane,
Which bluſhing Fancy ſtrives to hide in vain.
To POPE the titled Patron joy'd to bend,
Still more ennobled when proclaim'd his friend;
For him the hands of jarring Faction join
To keep their tribute on his HOMER's ſhrine.

Proud of the frank reward his talents find,
And nobly conſcious of no venal mind,
With the juſt world his fair account he clears,
And owns no debt to Princes or to Peers.
  Yet, while our nation feels new thirſt ariſe
For that pure joy which Poeſy ſupplies,
Bards, whom the tempting Muſe enliſts by ſtealth,
Perceive their path is not the road to wealth,
To honorable wealth, young Labor's ſpoil,
The due reward of no inglorious toil;
Whoſe well-earn'd comforts nobleſt minds engage,
The juſt aſylum of declining age;
Elſe had we ſeen a warm Poetic Youth
Change Fiction's roſes for the thorns of Truth,
From Fancy's realm, his native field, withdraw,
To pay hard homage to ſeverer Law.
  O thou bright Spirit, whom the Aſian Muſe
Had fondly ſteep'd in all her fragrant dews,
And o'er whoſe early Song, that mental feaſt,
She breath'd the ſweetneſs of the rifled Eaſt;
Since independant Honor's high controul
Detach'd from Poeſy thy ardent ſoul;

To

To ſeek with better hopes Perſuaſion's ſeat,
Bleſt be thoſe hopes, and happy that retreat!
Which with regret all Britiſh Bards muſt ſee,
And mourn a Brother loſt in loſing thee.

Nor leads the Poet's path to that throng'd gate
Where crouching Prieſts on proud Preferment wait;
Where, while in vain a thouſand vot'ries fawn,
She robes her fav'rite few in hallow'd Lawn:
Elſe, liberal MASON, had thy ſpotleſs name,
The Ward of Virtue as the Heir of Fame,
In liſts of mitred Lords been ſtill unread,
While Mitres drop on many a Critic's head?
Peace to all ſuch, whoſe decent brows may bear
Thoſe ſacred honors plac'd by Learning there;
May juſt reſpect from brutal inſult guard
Their Crown, unenvied by the genuine Bard!
Let Poeſy, embelliſh'd by thy care,
Pathetic MASON! with juſt pride declare,
Thy breaſt muſt feel a more exulting fire,
Than Pomp can give, or Dignity inſpire,
When Nature tells thee that thy Verſe imparts
The thrill of pleaſure to ten thouſand hearts;

And often has ſhe heard ingenuous Youth,
Accompliſh'd Beauty, and unbiaſs'd Truth,
Thoſe faithful harbingers of future fame,
With tender intereſt pronounce thy name
With lively gratitude for joy refin'd,
Gift of thy Genius to the feeling mind.
Theſe are the honors which the Muſe confers,
The radiant Crown of living light is her's;
And on thy brow ſhe gave thoſe gems to blaze,
That far outſhine the Mitre's tranſient rays;
Gems that ſhall mock malignant Envy's breath,
And ſhine ſtill brighter thro' the ſhades of death.
For me, who feel, whene'er I touch the lyre,
My talents ſink below my proud deſire;
Who often doubt, and ſometimes credit give,
When Friends aſſure me that my Verſe will live;
Whom health too tender for the buſtling throng
Led into penſive ſhade and ſoothing ſong;
Whatever fortune my unpoliſh'd rhymes
May meet, in preſent or in future times,
Let the bleſt Art my grateful thoughts employ,
Which ſooths my ſorrow and augments my joy;

Whence lonely Peace and ſocial Pleaſure ſprings,
And Friendſhip, dearer than the ſmile of Kings!
While keener Poets, querulouſly proud,
Lament the Ills of Poeſy aloud,
And magnify, with Irritation's zeal,
Thoſe common evils we too ſtrongly feel,
The envious Comment and the ſubtle Style
Of ſpecious Slander, ſtabbing with a ſmile;
Frankly I wiſh to make her Bleſſings known,
And think thoſe Bleſſings for her Ills atone:
Nor wou'd my honeſt pride that praiſe forego,
Which makes Malignity yet more my foe.
If heart-felt pain e'er led me to accuſe
The dangerous gift of the alluring Muſe,
'Twas in the moment when my Verſe impreſt
Some anxious feelings on a Mother's breaſt.
O thou fond Spirit, who with pride haſt ſmil'd,
And frown'd with fear, on thy poetic child,
Pleas'd, yet alarm'd, when in his boyiſh time
He ſigh'd in numbers, or he laugh'd in rhyme;
While thy kind cautions warn'd him to beware
Of Penury, the Bard's perpetual ſnare;

Marking the early temper of his ſoul,
Careleſs of wealth, nor fit for baſe controul:
Thou tender Saint, to whom he owes much more
Than ever Child to Parent ow'd before,
In life's firſt ſeaſon, when the fever's flame
Shrunk to deformity his ſhrivell'd frame,
And turn'd each fairer image in his brain
To blank confuſion and her crazy train,
'Twas thine, with conſtant love, thro' ling'ring years,
To bathe thy Idiot Orphan in thy tears;
Day after day, and night ſucceeding night,
To turn inceſſant to the hideous ſight,
And frequent watch, if haply at thy view
Departed Reaſon might not dawn anew.
Tho' medicinal art, with pitying care,
Cou'd lend no aid to ſave thee from deſpair,
Thy fond maternal heart adher'd to Hope and Prayer:
Nor pray'd in vain; thy child from Pow'rs above
Receiv'd the ſenſe to feel and bleſs thy love;
O might he thence receive the happy ſkill,
And force proportion'd to his ardent will,
With Truth's unfading radiance to emblaze
Thy virtues, worthy of immortal praiſe!

Nature,

Nature, who deck'd thy form with Beauty's flowers,
Exhauſted on thy ſoul her finer powers ;
Taught it with all her energy to feel
Love's melting ſoftneſs, Friendſhip's fervid zeal,
The generous purpoſe, and the active thought,
With Charity's diffuſive ſpirit fraught ;
There all the beſt of mental gifts ſhe plac'd,
Vigor of Judgment, purity of Taſte,
Superior parts, without their ſpleenful leaven,
Kindneſs to Earth, and confidence in Heaven.
While my fond thoughts o'er all thy merits roll,
Thy praiſe thus guſhes from my filial ſoul ;
Nor will the Public with harſh rigor blame
This my juſt homage to thy honor'd name ;
To pleaſe that Public, if to pleaſe be mine,
Thy Virtues train'd me—let the praiſe be thine.
Since thou haſt reach'd that world where Love alone,
Where Love Parental can exceed thy own ;
If in celeſtial realms the bleſt may know
And aid the objects of their care below,
While in this ſublunary ſcene of ſtrife
Thy Son poſſeſſes frail and feveriſh life,

If Heaven allot him many an added hour,
Gild it with virtuous thought and mental power,
Power to exalt, with every aim refin'd,
The lovelieſt of the Arts that bleſs mankind!

END OF THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE

THE FIFTH.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FIFTH EPISTLE.

Examination of the received opinion, that ſupernatural Agency is eſſential to the Epic Poem.—The folly and injuſtice of all arbitrary ſyſtems in Poetry.—The Epic province not yet exhauſted.—Subjects from Engliſh Hiſtory the moſt intereſting.—A national Epic Poem the great deſideratum in Engliſh literature.—The Author's wiſh of ſeeing it ſupplied by the genius of Mr. MASON.

EPISTLE V.

ILL-FATED Poeſy! as human worth,
Prais'd, yet unaided, often ſinks to earth;
So ſink thy powers; not doom'd alone to know
Scorn, or neglect, from an unfeeling Foe,
But deſtin'd more oppreſſive wrong to feel
From the miſguided Friend's perplexing zeal.
Such Friends are thoſe, who in their proud diſplay
Of thy young beauty, and thy early ſway,
Pretend thou'rt robb'd of all thy warmth ſublime,
By the benumbing touch of modern Time.

What! is the Epic Muſe, that lofty Fair,
Who makes the diſcipline of Earth her care!
That mighty Miniſter, whom Virtue leads
To train the nobleſt minds to nobleſt deeds!
Is ſhe, in office great, in glory rich,
Degraded to a poor, pretended Witch,

Who rais'd her ſpells, and all her magic power,
But on the folly of the favoring hour?
Whoſe dark, deſpis'd illuſions melt away
At the clear dawn of Philoſophic day?
To ſuch they ſink her, who lament her fall
From the high Synod of th' Olympian Hall;
Who worſhip Syſtem, hid in Fancy's veil,
And think that all her Epic force muſt fail,
If ſhe no more can borrow or create
Celeſtial Agents to uphold her ſtate.
To prove if this fam'd doctrine may be found
To reſt on ſolid, or on ſandy ground,
Let Critic Reaſon all her light diffuſe
O'er the wide empire of this injur'd Muſe,
To guide our ſearch to every varied ſource
And ſeparate ſinew of her vital force.—
To three prime powers within the human frame,
With equal energy ſhe points her aim:
By pure exalted Sentiment ſhe draws
From Judgment's ſteady voice no light applauſe;
By Nature's ſimple and pathetic ſtrains,
The willing homage of the Heart ſhe gains;

The precious tribute ſhe receives from theſe,
Shines undebas'd by changing Time's decrees;
The noble thought, that fir'd a Grecian ſoul,
Keeps o'er a Britiſh mind its firm controul;
The ſcenes, where Nature ſeems herſelf to ſpeak,
Still touch a Briton, as they touch'd a Greek:
To captivate admiring Fancy's eyes,
She bids celeſtial decorations riſe;
But, as a playful and capricious child
Frowns at the ſplendid toy on which it ſmil'd;
So wayward Fancy now with ſcorn ſurveys
Thoſe ſpecious Miracles ſhe lov'd to praiſe;
Still fond of change, and fickle Faſhion's dupe,
Now keen to ſoar, and eager now to ſtoop,
Her Gods, Dev'ls, Saints, Magicians, riſe and fall,
And now ſhe worſhips each, now laughs at all.
If then within the rich and wide domain
O'er which the Epic Muſe delights to reign,
One province weaker than the reſt be found,
'Tis her Celeſtial Sphere, or Fairy Ground:
Her realm of Marvels is the diſtant land,
O'er which ſhe holds a perilous command;

For, plac'd beyond the reach of Nature's aid,
Here her worſt foes her tottering force invade:
O'er the wide precinct proud Opinion towers,
And withers with a look its alter'd powers;
While laviſh Ridicule, pert Child of Taſte!
Turns the rich confine to ſo poor a waſte,
That ſome, who deem it but a cumbrous weight,
Would lop this Province from its Parent State.
What mighty voice firſt ſpoke this wond'rous law,
Which ductile Critics ſtill repeat with awe—
That man's unkindling ſpirit muſt refuſe
A generous plaudit to th' Heroic Muſe,
Howe'er ſhe paint her ſcenes of manly life,
If no ſuperior Agents aid the ſtrife?
In days of courtly wit, and wanton mirth,
The looſe PETRONIUS gave the maxim birth; *
Perchance, to ſooth the envious Nero's ear,
And ſink the Bard whoſe fame he figh'd to hear;
To injure LUCAN, whoſe advent'rous mind,
Inflam'd by Freedom, with juſt ſcorn reſign'd

* Ver. 76. See NOTE I.

Th' exhauſted fables of the ſtarry pole,
And found a nobler theme in CATO's ſoul:
To wound him, in the maſk of Critic art,
The ſubtle Courtier launch'd this venom'd dart,
And following Critics, fond of Claſſic lore,
Still echo the vain law from ſhore to ſhore;
On Poets ſtill for Deities they call,
And deem mere earthly Bards no Bards at all.
Yet, if by fits the mighty HOMER nods,
Where ſinks he more than with his ſleepy Gods?
E'en LUCAN proves, by his immortal name,
How weak the dagger levell'd at his fame;
For in his Song, which Time will ne'er forget,
If Taſte, who much may praiſe, will much regret,
'Tis not the abſence of th' Olympian ſtate,
Embroil'd by jarring Gods in coarſe debate:
'Tis nice arrangement, Nature's eaſy air,
In ſcenes unfolded with ſuperior care;
'Tis ſofter diction, elegantly terſe,
And the fine poliſh of Virgilian Verſe.
O blind to Nature! who aſſert the Muſe
Muſt o'er the human frame her empire loſe,

Failing to fly, in Fancy's wild career,
Above this viſible diurnal ſphere!
  Behold yon penſive Fair! who turns with grief
The tender Novel's ſoul-poſſeſſing leaf!
Why with moiſt eyes to thoſe ſoft pages glu'd,
Forgetting her fix'd hours of ſleep and food;
Why does ſhe keenly graſp its precious woes,
Nor quit the volume till the ſtory cloſe?
'Tis not that Fancy plays her revels there,
Cheating the mind with lucid forms of air;
'Tis not that Paſſion, in a ſtyle impure,
Holds the warm ſpirit by a wanton lure:
'Tis ſuffering Virtue's ſympathetic ſway,
That all the fibres of her breaſt obey;
'Tis Action, where Immortals claim no part;
'Tis Nature, grappled to the human heart.
  If this firm Sov'reign of the feeling breaſt
Can thus the faſcinated thought arreſt,
And thro' the boſom's deep receſſes pierce,
Ungrac'd, unaided by enchanting Verſe,
Say! ſhall we think, with limited controul,
She wants ſufficient force to ſeize the ſoul,

When Harmony's congenial tones convey
Charms to her voice, that aid its magic ſway?
If Admiration's hand, with eager graſp,
Her darling HOMER's deathleſs volume claſp,
Say to what ſcenes her partial eyes revert!
Say what they firſt explore, and laſt deſert!
The ſcenes that glitter with no heavenly blaze,
Where human agents human feelings raiſe,
While Truth, enamor'd of the lovely line,
Cries to their parent Nature, "Theſe are thine."
When Neptune riſes in Homeric ſtate,
And on their Lord the Powers of Ocean wait;
Tho' pliant Fancy trace the ſteps he trod,
And with a tranſient worſhip own the God,
Yet colder readers with indifference view,
The Sovereign of the deep, and all his vaſſal crew,
Nor feel his watery pomp their mind enlarge,
More than the pageant of my Lord May'r's barge.
But when Achilles' wrongs our eyes engage,
All boſoms burn with ſympathetic rage:
And when thy love parental, Chief of Troy!
Haſtes to relieve the terrors of thy boy,

Our

Our ſenſes in thy fond emotion join,
And every heart's in uniſon with thine.
  Still in the Muſe's ear ſhall Echo ring,
That heavenly Agents are her vital ſpring?
Thoſe who conclude her winning charms ariſe
From Beings darting from the diſtant ſkies,
Appear to cheriſh a conceit as vain,
As once was harbour'd in Neanthus' brain,
When he believ'd that harmony muſt dwell
In the cold concave of the Orphic ſhell:
The ancient Lyre, to which the Thracian ſung,
Whoſe hallow'd chords were in a temple hung,
The ſhallow Youth with weak ambition ſought,
And of the pilfering Prieſt the relique bought;
Viewing his treaſure with deluded gaze,
He deem'd himſelf the heir of Orphic praiſe;
But when his awkward fingers tried to bring
Expected muſic from the ſilent ſtring,
Not e'en the milder brutes his diſcord bore,
But howling dogs the fancied Orpheus tore. *

* Ver. 166. See NOTE II.

When

When the true Poet, in whoſe frame are join'd
Softneſs of Heart and Energy of Mind,
His Epic ſcene's expanſive limit draws,
Faithful to Nature's univerſal laws;
If thro' her various walks he boldly range,
Marking how oft her pliant features change;
If, as ſhe teaches, his quick powers ſupply
Succeſſive pictures to th' aſtoniſh'd eye,
Where nobleſt paſſions nobleſt deeds inſpire,
And radiant ſouls exhibit all their fire;
Where ſofter forms their ſweet attractions blend,
And ſuffering Beauty makes the world her friend;
If thus he build his Rhyme, with varied art,
On each dear intereſt of the human heart,
His genius, by no vain conceits betray'd,
May ſpurn faint Allegory's feeble aid.
Th' Heroic Muſe, in earthly virtue ſtrong,
May drive the hoſt of Angels from her Song,
As her fair Siſter Muſe, the Tragic Queen,
Has baniſh'd Ghoſts from her pathetic ſcene,
Tho' her high ſoul, by SHAKESPEARE's magic ſway'd,
Still bends to buried Denmark's aweful Shade.

If we eſteem this Epic Queen ſo great,
To ſpare her heavenly train, yet keep her ſtate,
'Tis not our aim, with ſyſtematic pride,
To ſink their glory, or their powers to hide,
Who add, when folded in the Muſe's arms,
Celeſtial beauty to her earthly charms.
Sublimely faſhion'd, by no mortal hands,
The dome of mental Pleaſure wide expands:
Form'd to preſide o'er its allotted parts,
At different portals ſtand the ſeparate Arts;
But every portal different paths may gain,
Alike uniting in the myſtic Fane.
Contentious mortals on theſe paths debate;
Some, wrangling on the road, ne'er reach the gate,
While others, arm'd with a deſpotic rod,
Allow no paſs but what themſelves have trod.
The nobleſt ſpirits, to this foible prone,
Have ſlander'd powers congenial with their own:
Hence, on a Brother's genius MILTON frown'd,
Scorning the graceful chains of final ſound,
And to one form confin'd the free ſublime,
Inſulting DRYDEN as the Man of Rhyme.

Caprice

Caprice ſtill gives this laſting ſtruggle life;
Rhyme and Blank Verſe maintain their idle ſtrife:
The friends of one are ſtill the other's foes,
For ſtubborn Prejudice no mercy knows.
As in Religion, Zealots, blindly warm,
Neglect the Eſſence, while they graſp the Form;
Poetic Bigots, thus perverſely wrong,
Think Modes of Verſe comprize the Soul of Song.
If the fine Statuary fill his part
With all the powers of energetic Art;
If to the figures, that, with ſkill exact,
His genius blends in one impaſſion'd act,
If to this Group ſuch ſpeaking force he give,
That ſtartled Nature almoſt cries "They live;"
All tongues with zeal th' enchanting work applaud,
Nor the great Artiſt of due praiſe defraud,
Whether he form'd the rich expreſſive maſs
Of Parian marble, or Corinthian braſs;
For each his powers might faſhion to fulfil
The nobleſt purpoſe of mimetic ſkill;
Each from his ſoul might catch Promethean fire,
And ſpeak his talents, till the world expire.

'Tis thus that MILTON's Verſe, and DRYDEN's Rhyme,
Are proof alike againſt the rage of Time;
Each Maſter modell'd, with a touch ſo bold,
The rude materials which he choſe to mould,
That each his portion to perfection brought,
Accompliſhing the glorious end he ſought.
Falſe to themſelves, and to their intereſt blind,
Are thoſe cold judges, of faſtidious mind,
Who with vain rules the ſuffering Arts would load,
Who, ere they ſmile, conſult the Critic's code;
Where, puzzled by the different doubts they ſee,
(For who ſo oft as Critics diſagree?)
They loſe that pleaſure by free ſpirits ſeiz'd,
In vainly ſettling how they ſhould be pleas'd.
Far wiſer thoſe, who, with a generous joy,
Nor blindly fond, nor petulantly coy,
Follow each movement of the varying Muſe,
Whatever ſtep her airy form may chuſe,
Nor to one march her rapid feet confine,
While eaſe and ſpirit in her geſture join;
Thoſe who facilitate her free deſire,
To melt the heart, or ſet the ſoul on fire;

Who,

Who, if her voice to ſimple Nature lean,
And fill with Human forms her Epic ſcene;
Pleas'd with her aim, aſſiſt her moral plan,
And feel with manly ſympathy for Man:
Or if ſhe draw, by Fancy's magic tones,
Ætherial Spirits from their ſapphire thrones,
Her Heavenly ſhapes with willing homage greet,
And aid, with ductile thought, her bright deceit;
For, if the Epic Muſe ſtill wiſh to tower
Above plain Nature's firm and graceful power,
Tho' Critics think her vital powers are loſt
In cold Philoſophy's petrific froſt;
That Magic cannot her ſunk charms reſtore,
That Heaven and Hell can yield her nothing more;
Yet may ſhe dive to many a ſecret ſource
And copious ſpring of viſionary force:
India yet holds a Mythologic mine,
Her ſtrength may open, and her art refine:
Tho' Aſian ſpoils the realms of Europe fill,
Thoſe Eaſtern riches are unrifled ſtill;
Genius may there his courſe of honor run,
And ſpotleſs Laurels in that field be won. *

* Ver. 276. See NOTE III.

Yet

Yet nobler aims the Bards of Britain court,
Who ſteer by Freedom's ſtar to Glory's port;
Our gen'rous Iſle, with far ſuperior claim,
Aſks for her Chiefs the palm of Epic fame.
In every realm where'er th' Heroic Muſe
Has deign'd her glowing ſpirit to infuſe,
Her tuneful Sons with civic ſplendor blaze,
The honour'd Heralds of their country's praiſe,
Save in our land, the nation of the earth
Ordain'd to give the brighteſt Heroes birth!—
By ſome ſtrange fate, which rul'd each Poet's tongue,
Her deareſt Worthies yet remain unſung.
Critics there are, who, with a ſcornful ſmile,
Reject the annals of our martial Iſle,
And, dead to patriot Paſſion, coldly deem
They yield for lofty Song no touching theme.
What! can the Britiſh heart, humanely brave,
Feel for the Greek who loſt his female ſlave?
Can it, devoted to a ſavage Chief,
Swell with his rage, and ſoften with his grief?
And ſhall it not with keener zeal embrace
Their brighter cauſe, who, born of Britiſh race,

With the ſtrong cement of the blood they ſpilt,
The ſplendid fane of Britiſh Freedom built?
Bleſt Spirits, who, with kindred fire endued,
Thro' different ages this bright work purſued,
May Art and Genius crown your ſainted band
With that poetic wreath your Deeds demand!
While, led by Fancy thro' her wide domain,
Our ſteps advance around her Epic plain;
While we ſurvey each laurel that it bore,
And every confine of the realm explore,
See Liberty, array'd in light ſerene,
Pours her rich luſtre o'er th' expanding ſcene!
Thee, Mason, thee ſhe views with fond regard,
And calls to nobler heights her fav'rite Bard.
Tracing a circle with her blazing ſpear,
" Here," cries the Goddeſs, " raiſe thy fabric here,
Build on theſe rocks, that to my reign belong,
The nobleſt baſis of Heroic Song!
Fix here! and, while thy growing works aſcend,
My voice ſhall guide thee, and my arm defend."
As thus ſhe ſpeaks, methinks her high beheſt
Imparts pure rapture to thy conſcious breaſt,

Pure as the joy immortal NEWTON found,
When Nature led him to her utmoſt bound,
And clearly ſhew'd, where unborn ages lie,
The diſtant Comet to his daring eye;
Pure as the joy the Sire of mortals knew,
When bliſsful Eden open'd on his view,
When firſt he liſten'd to the voice Divine,
And wond'ring heard, "This Paradiſe is thine."
With ſuch delight may'ſt thou her gift receive!
May thy warm heart with bright ambition heave
To raiſe a Temple to her hallow'd name,
Above what Grecian artiſts knew to frame!
Of Engliſh form the ſacred fabric rear,
And bid our Country with juſt rites revere
The Power, who ſheds, in her benignant ſmile,
The brighteſt Glory on our boaſted Iſle!
Juſtly on thee th' inſpiring Goddeſs calls;
Her mighty taſk each weaker Bard appalls:
'Tis thine, O MASON! with unbaffled ſkill,
Each harder duty of our Art to fill;
'Tis thine, in robes of beauty to array,
And in bright Order's lucid blaze diſplay,

The forms that Fancy, to thy wiſhes kind,
Stamps on the tablet of thy clearer mind.
How ſoftly ſweet thy notes of pathos ſwell,
The tender accents of Elfrida tell;
Caractacus proclaims, with Freedom's fire,
How rich the tone of thy ſublimer Lyre;
E'en in this hour, propitious to thy fame,
The rural Deities repeat thy name:
With feſtive joy I hear the ſylvan throng
Hail the completion of their favorite Song,
Thy graceful Song! in honor of whoſe power,
Delighted Flora, in her ſweeteſt bower,
Weaves thy unfading wreath;—with fondeſt care,
Proudly ſhe weaves it, emulouſly fair,
To match that crown, which in the Mantuan grove
The richer Ceres for her VIRGIL wove!
See! his Euridice herſelf once more
Reviſits earth from the Elyſian ſhore!
Behold! ſhe hovers o'er thy echoing glade!
Envy, not love, conducts the penſive Shade,
Who, trembling at thy Lyre's pathetic tone,
Fears leſt Nerina's fame ſurpaſs her own.

Thou happy Bard! whoſe ſweet and potent voice
Can reach all notes within the Poet's choice;
Whoſe vivid ſoul has led thee to infuſe
Dramatic life in the preceptive Muſe;
Since, bleſt alike with Beauty and with Force,
Thou rivall'ſt VIRGIL in his Sylvan courſe,
O be it thine the higher palm to gain,
And paſs him in the wide Heroic plain!
To ſing, with equal fire, of nobler themes,
To gild Hiſtoric Truth with Fancy's beams!
To Patriot Chiefs unſung thy Lyre devote,
And ſwell to Liberty the lofty note!
With humbler aim, but no ungenerous view,
My ſteps, leſs firm, their lower path purſue;
Of different Arts I ſearch the ample field,
Mark its paſt fruits, and what it yet may yield;
With willing voice the praiſe of Merit ſound,
And bow to Genius whereſoever found;
O'er my free Verſe bid nobleſt names preſide,
Tho' Party's hoſtile lines thoſe names divide;
Party! whoſe murdering ſpirit I abhor,
More ſubtly cruel, and leſs brave than War.

Party! inſidious Fiend! whoſe vapors blind
The light of Juſtice in the brighteſt mind;
Whoſe feveriſh tongue, whence deadly venom flows,
Baſely belies the merit of her foes!
O that my Verſe with magic power were bleſt,
To drive from Learning's field this baleful peſt!
Fond, fruitleſs wiſh! the mighty taſk would foil
The firmeſt ſons of Literary Toil;
In vain a letter'd Hercules might riſe
To cleanſe the ſtable where this Monſter lies:
Yet, if the Imps of her malignant brood,
With all their Parent's acrid gall endu'd;
If Spleen pours forth, to Mockery's apiſh tune,
Her gibing Ballad, and her baſe Lampoon,
On faireſt names, from every blemiſh free,
Save what the jaundic'd eyes of Party ſee;
My glowing ſcorn will execrate the rhyme,
Tho' laughing Humor ſtrike its tuneful chime;
Tho' keeneſt Wit the glitt'ring lines inveſt
With all the ſplendor of the Adder's creſt.
  Sublimer Mason! not to thee belong
The reptile beauties of envenom'd Song.

Thou chief of living Bards! O be it ours,
In fame tho' different, as of different powers,
Party's dark clouds alike to riſe above,
And reach the firmament of Public Love!
May'ſt thou aſcend Parnaſſus' higheſt mound,
In triumph there the Epic Trumpet ſound;
While, with no envious zeal, I thus aſpire
By juſt applauſe to fan thy purer fire;
And of the Work which Freedom pants to ſee,
Which thy firm Genius claims reſerv'd for thee,
In this frank ſtyle my honeſt thoughts impart,
If not an Artiſt yet a friend to Art.

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTES

TO THE

FIRST EPISTLE.

NOTE I. Ver. 7.

SUCH dark decrees have letter'd Bigots penn'd,
Yet ſeiz'd that honor'd name, the Poet's Friend.] Of the ſeveral authors who have written on Epic Poetry, many of the moſt celebrated are more likely to confound and depreſs, than to enlighten and exalt the young Poetical Student. The Poetics of Scaliger, which are little more than a laboured panegyric of Virgil, would lead him to regard the Æneid as the only ſtandard of perfection; and the more elegant and accompliſhed Vida inculcates the ſame puſillanimous leſſon, though in ſpirited and harmonious verſe.

Unus hic ingenio præſtanti gentis Achivæ
Divinos vates longe ſuperavit, et arte,
Aureus immortale ſonans. ſtupet ipſa pavetque,
Quamvis ingentem miretur Græcia Homerum.
— — — — — —
Ergo ipſum ante alios animo venerare Maronem,
Atque unum ſequere, utque potes, veſtigia ſerva!
VIDA.

See how the Grecian Bards, at diſtance thrown,
With reverence bow to this diſtinguiſh'd ſon;
Immortal ſounds his golden lines impart,
And nought can match his Genius but his Art;

E'en Greece turns pale and trembles at his fame,
Which ſhades the luſtre of her Homer's name.

— — — — — —

Hence, ſacred Virgil from thy ſoul adore
Above the reſt, and to thy utmoſt power
Purſue the glorious paths he ſtruck before.

PITT's Tranſlation.

A Critic, who lately roſe to great eminence in our own country, has endeavoured by a more ſingular method to damp the ardour of inventive Genius, and to annihilate the hopes of all who would aſpire to the praiſe of originality in this higher ſpecies of poetical compoſition. He has attempted to eſtabliſh a Triumvirate in the Epic world, with a perpetuity of dominion. Every reader who is converſant with modern criticiſm will perceive that I allude to the following paſſage in the famous Diſſertation on the ſixth Book of Virgil:—"Juſt as Virgil rivalled Homer, ſo Milton emulated both of them. He found Homer poſſeſſed of the province of Morality; Virgil of Politics; and nothing left for him but that of Religion. This he ſeized, as aſpiring to ſhare with them in the government of the Poetic world: and, by means of the ſuperior dignity of his ſubject, hath gotten to the head of that Triumvirate, which took ſo many ages in forming. Theſe are the three ſpecies of the Epic Poem; for its largeſt ſphere is *human action*, which can be conſidered but in a *moral*, political, or religious view: and Theſe the three *Makers*; for each of their Poems was ſtruck out at a heat, and came to perfection from its firſt eſſay. Here then the grand ſcene was cloſed, and all farther improvements of the Epic at an end."

I apprehend that few critical remarks contain more *abſurdity* (to uſe the favourite expreſſion of the author I have quoted) than the preceding lines. Surely Milton is himſelf a proof that *human action* is not the largeſt ſphere of the Epic Poem; and as to Virgil, his moſt paſſionate admirers muſt allow, that in ſubject and deſign he is much leſs of an original than Camoens or Lucan. But ſuch a critical ſtatute of limitation, if I may call it ſo, is not leſs pernicious than abſurd. To diſfigure the ſphere of Imagination with theſe capricious and arbitrary zones is an injury to ſcience. Such Criticiſm, inſtead of giving ſpirit

and energy to the laudable ambition of a youthful Poet, can only lead him to ſtart like Macbeth at unreal mockery, and to exclaim, when he is invited by Genius to the banquet, " The Table's full."

NOTE II. Ver. 77.

Thus, at their banquets, fabling Greeks rehearſe
The fancied origin of ſacred Verſe.] For this fable, ſuch as it is, I am indebted to a paſſage in Athenæus, which the curious reader may find in the cloſe of that fanciful and entertaining compiler, page 701 of Caſaubon's edition.

NOTE III. Ver. 207.

Why did the Epic Muſe's ſilent lyre
Shrink from thoſe feats that ſummon'd all her fire?] I have ventured to ſuppoſe that Greece produced no worthy ſucceſſor of Homer, and that her exploits againſt the Perſians were not celebrated by any Poet in a manner ſuitable to ſo ſublime a ſubject;—yet an author named Chærilus is ſaid to have recorded thoſe triumphs of his country in verſe, and to have pleaſed the Athenians ſo highly as to obtain from them a public and pecuniary reward. He is ſuppoſed to have been a cotemporary of the hiſtorian Herodotus. But from the general ſilence of the more early Greek writers concerning the merit of this Poet, we may, I think, very fairly conjecture that his compoſitions were not many degrees ſuperior to thoſe of his unfortunate nameſake, who frequented the court of Alexander the Great, and is ſaid to have ſung the exploits of his Sovereign, on the curious conditions of receiving a piece of gold for every good verſe, and a box on the ear for every bad one. The old Scholiaſt on Horace, who has preſerved this idle ſtory, concludes it by ſaying, that the miſerable Bard was beat to death in conſequence of his contract. Some eminent modern Critics have indeed attempted to vindicate the reputation of the more early Chærilus, who is ſuppoſed to be confounded, both by Horace himſelf, and afterwards by Scaliger, with the Chærilus rewarded by Alexander. Voſſius *, in particular, appears a warm advocate in his behalf, and appeals to various fragments of the ancient Bard

* De Hiſtoricis Græcis.

preſerved by Ariſtotle, Strabo, and others, and to the teſtimony of Plutarch in his favour. But on conſulting the fragments he has referred to, they rather fortify than remove my conjecture. The ſcrap preſerved by Ariſtotle in his Rhetoric is only half a verſe, and quoted without any commendation of its author. The two citations in Strabo amount to little more. The curious reader may alſo find in Athenæus an Epitaph on Sardanapalus, attributed to this Poet; who is mentioned by the ſame author as peculiarly addicted to the groſſer exceſſes of the table.——Let us now return to that Chærilus whom Horace has "damn'd to everlaſting fame." The judicious and elegant Roman Satiriſt ſeems remarkably unjuſt, in paying a compliment to the poetical judgment of his patron Auguſtus, at the expence of the Macedonian hero. Alexander appears to have poſſeſſed much more poetical ſpirit, and a higher reliſh for poetry, than the cold-blooded Octavius. It is peculiarly unfair, to urge his liberality to a poor Poet as a proof that he wanted critical diſcernment, when he had himſelf ſo thoroughly vindicated the delicacy of his taſte, by the enthuſiaſtic Bon-mot, that he had rather be the Therſites of Homer than the Achilles of Chærilus.

NOTE IV. VERSE 231.

When grave Boſſu by Syſtem's ſtudied laws
The Grecian Bard's ideal picture draws.] Though Boſſu is called "the beſt explainer of Ariſtotle, and one of the moſt learned and judicious of modern critics," by a writer for whoſe opinions I have much eſteem, I cannot help thinking that his celebrated Eſſay on Epic Poetry is very ill calculated either to guide or to inſpirit a young Poet. The abſurdity of his advice concerning the mode of forming the fable, by chuſing a moral, inventing the incidents, and then ſearching hiſtory for names to ſuit them, has been ſufficiently expoſed: and as to his leading idea, concerning the deſign of Homer in the compoſition of the Iliad and Odyſſey, I apprehend moſt poetical readers muſt feel that he is probably miſtaken; for it is a conjectural point, and placed beyond the poſſibility of deciſion. Perhaps few individuals differ more from each other in their modes of thinking, by the force of education and of national manners, than a modern French Critic and an early Poet of Greece; yet the former will often pretend, with the moſt deciſive air,

to

to lay open the ſenſorium of an ancient Bard, and to count every link in the chain of his ideas. Thoſe who are moſt acquainted with the movements of imagination, will acknowledge the ſteps of this airy power to be ſo light and evaneſcent in their nature, that perhaps a Poet himſelf, in a few years after finiſhing his work, might be utterly unable to recollect the exact train of thought, or the various minute occurrences which led him to the general deſign, or directed him in the particular parts of his poem. But, in ſpite of the interval of many hundred centuries, the deciſive magic of criticiſm can call up all the ſhadows of departed thought that ever exiſted in his brain, and diſplay, with a moſt aſtoniſhing clearneſs, the preciſe ſtate of his mind in the moment of compoſition.

" Homere," ſays Boſſu, " * voyoit les Grecs pour qui il écrivoit, diviſéz en autant d'etats qu'ils avoient de villes conſiderables: chacune faiſoit un corps à part & avoit ſa forme de gouvernement independamment de toutes les autres. Et toute-fois ces etats differens etoient ſouvent obligéz de ſe reünir comme en un ſeul corps contre leurs ennemis communs. Voilà ſans doute deux ſortes de gouvernemens bien differens, pour etre commodement reunis en un corps de morale, & en un ſeul poëme.

" Le poëte en a donc fait deux fables ſeparées. L'une eſt pour toute la Grece reünie en un ſeul corps, mais compoſée de parties independantes les unes des autres, comme elles etoient en effet; & l'autre eſt pour chaque etat particulier, tels qu'ils etoient pendant la paix, ſans ce premier rapport & ſans la neceſſité de ſe reünir.

" Homere a donc pris pour le fond de ſa fable, cette grande verité, que la Meſintelligence des princes ruine leurs propres etats."

On the Odyſſey Boſſu remarks, " Que la verité qui ſert de fond à cette fiction, & qui avec elle compoſe la fable, eſt, que l'abſence d'une perſonne hors de chez ſoi, ou qui n'a point l'œil à ce qui s'y fait, y cauſe de grands deſordres †."

On the mature conſideration of theſe two moral axioms, the Critic ſuppoſes the ſublime Bard to have begun his reſpective Poems; for Homer, continues he, " ‡ n'avoit point d'autre deſſein que de former

* Livre i. chap. 8. † Livre i. chap. 10. ‡ Livre i. chap. 13.

agreablement les mœurs de ſes Citoïens, en leur propoſant, comme dit Horace, ce qui eſt utile ou pernicieux, ce qui eſt honnete ou ce qui ne l'eſt pas: --- il n'a entrepris de raconter aucune action particuliere d'Achille ou d'Ulyſſe. Il a fait la fable et le deſſein de ſes poemes, ſans penſer à ces princes; & enſuite il leur a fait l'honneur de donner leurs noms aux heros qu'il avoit feints."

The preceding remarks of this celebrated Critic have been frequently admired as an ingenious conjecture, which moſt happily illuſtrates the real purpoſe of Homer. To me they appear ſo much the reverſe, that if I ventured to adopt any decided opinion on a point ſo much darkened by the clouds of antiquity, I ſhould rather incline to the idea which Boſſu affects to explode, and ſuppoſe the Poems of Homer intended panegyrics on the very princes whom the Critic affirms he never thought of while he was deſigning the works which have made them immortal.

There is a ſtriking paſſage on this ſubject in a dialogue of Plato, which I ſhall enlarge upon, for two reaſons: 1ſt, As it proves that the latter perſuaſion concerning the purpoſe of Homer was entertained at Athens; and 2dly, Becauſe it gives me a pleaſing opportunity of ſupporting the learned Madame Dacier againſt an ill-grounded cenſure of a late Engliſh critic. In her Preface to the Odyſſey, ſhe aſſerts that the judgment of antiquity decided in favor of the Iliad; and ſhe appeals to part of the ſentence in Plato to which I have alluded, as a proof of her aſſertion. Mr. Wood, in a note to the Introduction of his Eſſay on Homer, endeavours to ſhew the inſufficiency of this proof; and ſtill farther, to convince us that Madame Dacier was utterly miſtaken in her ſenſe of the paſſage to which ſhe appealed. If he ventures to contradict this learned lady, he does not however inſult her with that inſolent pertneſs with which ſhe is frequently treated in the notes to Pope's Homer; and which, for the honour of our Engliſh Poet, I will not ſuppoſe to be his. But though Mr. Wood endeavours to ſupport his opinion by argument, I apprehend that he is himſelf miſtaken, and that Madame Dacier is perfectly right in underſtanding the words of Socrates in their literal ſenſe, without the leaſt mixture of irony. It is true, indeed, that the aim of Socrates, in the courſe of the dialogue, is to ridicule the preſumption and ignorance of the ſophiſt Hippias, in the moſt

moſt ironical manner; but the particular ſpeech on which Madame Dacier founds her opinion, is a plain and ſimple addreſs to Eudicus, before he enters on his debate with the Sophiſt. It turns on the moſt ſimple circumſtance, the truth of which Eudicus could hardly be ignorant of, namely, the ſentiments of his own father concerning the Poems of Homer. As theſe ſentiments are ſuch as I believe moſt admirers of the ancient Bard have entertained on the point in queſtion, I perfectly agree with Madame Dacier in thinking that Socrates means to be literal and ſerious, when he ſays to Eudicus, Τῳ σῷ πατρος Απημαντου ηκουον οτι η Ιλιας καλλιον ειη ποιημα ᾧ Ομηρω η η Οδυσσεια· τοσουτω δε καλλιον οσω αμεινων Αχιλλευς Οδυσσεως ειη. εκατερον γαρ των ποιηματων το μεν εις Οδυσσεα εφη πεποιησθαι, το δ' εις Αχιλλεα. Plat. Hip. min. edit. Serrani, tom. i. pag. 363. "I have heard your father Apemantus ſay, that the Iliad of Homer was a finer poem than his Odyſſey, and as far ſurpaſſed it in excellence as the virtue of Achilles ſurpaſſed the virtue of Ulyſſes; for thoſe two poems, he ſaid, were purpoſely compoſed in honour of thoſe two heroes: the Odyſſey, to ſhew the virtues of Ulyſſes; the Iliad, thoſe of Achilles." Plato's Leſſer Hippias, tranſlated by Sydenham, page 13.

Let us now return to Boſſu; whoſe opinion concerning the purpoſe of Homer we may venture to oppoſe, ſupported as it is by an ingenious interpretation of ſome ambiguous paſſages in the Poetics of Ariſtotle; and this oppoſition may be grounded, not ſo much on the ſentence which I have quoted from Plato, as on the probable conduct of Epic compoſition in the early ages of poetry. In ſuch periods as produced the talents of Virgil and of Dryden, when all the arts of refined flattery were perfectly underſtood, we can eaſily conceive that they might both be tempted to compliment the reigning monarch under the maſk of ſuch heroic names as hiſtory could ſupply, and their genius accommodate to their purpoſe. We find accordingly, that the Roman Bard is ſuppoſed to have drawn a flattering portrait of his Emperor in the character of Æneas, and that the Engliſh Poet has, with equal ingenuity, enwrapt the diſſolute Charles the Second in the Jewiſh robes of King David. But in ſo rude an age as we muſt admit that of Homer to have been; when the Poet was certainly more the child of Nature than of Art; when he had no hiſtory to conſult, perhaps no patron to flatter, and no critics

to

to eludo or obey; in ſuch an age, may we not more naturally conjecture, that poetical compoſition was neither laboured in its form, nor deep in its deſign? that, inſtead of being the ſlow and ſyſtematic product of political reaſoning, it was the quick and artleſs offspring of a ſtrong and vivifying fancy, which, brooding over the tales of tradition, ſoon raiſed them into ſuch life and beauty, as muſt ſatisfy and enchant a warlike and popular audience, ever ready to liſten with delight to the heroic feats of their anceſtors.

If the learned Boſſu appears unfortunate in his ſyſtem concerning the purpoſe of Homer, he may be thought ſtill more ſo in his attempt to analyze the Divinities of Virgil; for, to throw new light on the convention of the Gods, in the opening of the tenth Æneid, he very ſeriouſly informs us, that "* Venus is divine mercy, or the love of God towards virtuous men; and Juno his juſtice."

I cannot conclude theſe very free ſtrictures on a celebrated author, without bearing a pleaſing teſtimony to the virtues of the man.—Boſſu is allowed by the biographers of his country to have been remarkable for the mildeſt manners and moſt amiable diſpoſition; totally free from that imperious and bigotted attachment to ſpeculative opinions, which the ſcience he cultivated is ſo apt to produce. He endeared himſelf to Boileau by a generous act of friendſhip, that led to an intimacy between them, which was diſſolved only by the death of the former, in 1680.

NOTE V. VERSE 244.

Imputes to Virgil his own dark conceit.] As it requires much leiſure to examine, and more ſkill to unravel an intricate hypotheſis, twiſted into a long and laboured chain of quotation and argument, the Diſſertation on the ſixth Book of Virgil remained for ſome time unrefuted. The public very quietly acquieſced in the ſtrange poſition of its author, "That Æneas's adventure to the infernal ſhades, is no other than a figurative deſcription of his initiation into the Myſteries; and particularly a very exact one of the ſpectacles of the Eleuſinian." At length a ſuperior but anonymous Critic aroſe, who, in one of the moſt judicious

* Book v. chap. 1.

and ſpirited eſſays that our nation has produced on a point of claſſical literature, completely overturned this ill-founded edifice, and expoſed the arrogance and futility of its aſſuming architect. The Eſſay I allude to is entitled "Critical Obſervations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid;" printed for Elmſly, 1770: and as this little publication is, I believe, no longer to be purchaſed, the curious reader may thank me for tranſcribing a few of its moſt ſtriking paſſages.

Having ridiculed, with great ſpirit and propriety, Warburton's general idea of the Æneid as a political inſtitute, and his ill-ſupported aſſertion, that both the ancient and modern poets afforded Virgil a pattern for introducing the Myſteries into this famous epiſode, the author proceeds to examine how far the Critic's hypotheſis of initiation may be ſupported or overthrown by the text of the Poet. "It is," ſays he, "from extrinſical circumſtances that we may expect the diſcovery of Virgil's allegory. Every one of theſe circumſtances perſuades me, that Virgil deſcribed a real, not a mimic world, and that the ſcene lay in the Infernal Shades, and not in the Temple of Ceres.

"The ſingularity of the Cumæan ſhores muſt be preſent to every traveller who has once ſeen them. To a ſuperſtitious mind, the thin cruſt, vaſt cavities, ſulphureous ſteams, poiſonous exhalations, and fiery torrents, may ſeem to trace out the narrow confine of the two worlds. The lake Avernus was the chief object of religious horror; the black woods which ſurrounded it, when Virgil firſt came to Naples, were perfectly ſuited to feed the ſuperſtition of the people *. It was generally believed, that this deadly flood was the entrance of Hell †; and an oracle was once eſtabliſhed on its banks, which pretended, by magic rites, to call up the departed ſpirits ‡. Æneas, who revolved a more daring enterprize, addreſſes himſelf to the prieſteſs of thoſe dark regions. Their converſation may perhaps inform us whether an initiation, or a deſcent to the Shades, was the object of this enterprize. She endeavours to deter the hero, by ſetting before him all the dangers of his raſh undertaking.

* Strabo, l. v. p. 168. † Sil. Ital. l. xii. ‡ Diod. Siculus, l. iv. p. 267. edit. Weſſeling.

——Facilis

——— Facilis deſcenſus Averni;
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis:
Sed revocare gradum, ſuperaſque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor eſt *.

" Theſe particulars are abſolutely irreconcileable with the idea of initiation, but perfectly agreeable to that of a real deſcent. That every ſtep and every inſtant may lead us to the grave, is a melancholy truth. The Myſteries were only open at ſtated times, a few days at moſt in the courſe of a year. The mimic deſcent of the Myſteries was laborious and dangerous, the return to light eaſy and certain. In real death this order is inverted.

——— Pauci quos æquus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,
Diis geniti, potuere †.

Theſe heroes, as we learn from the Speech of Æneas, were Hercules, Orpheus, Caſtor and Pollux, Theſeus, and Pirithous. Of all theſe antiquity believed, that, before their death, they had ſeen the habitations of the dead; nor indeed will any of the circumſtances tally with a ſuppoſed initiation. The adventure of Eurydice, the alternate life of the Brothers, and the forcible intruſion of Alcides, Theſeus, and Pirithous, would mock the endeavours of the moſt ſubtle critic, who ſhould try to melt them down into his favourite Myſteries. The exploits of Hercules, who triumphed over the King of Terrors,

Tartareum ille manu cuſtodem in vincla petivit
Ipſius a ſolio regis, traxitque trementem ‡.

was a wild imagination of the Greeks §; but it was the duty of ancient Poets to adopt and embelliſh theſe popular traditions; and it is the intereſt of every man of taſte to acquieſce in *their poetical fictions*."

" Virgil has borrowed, as uſual, from Homer his epiſode of the

* Æneid vi. 126. † Ibid. vi. 129. ‡ Ibid. vi. 395.
§ Homer Odyſſ. l. xi. ver. 623. Apoll. Bib. l. ii. c. 5.

Infernal Shades, and, as uſual, has infinitely improved what the Grecian had invented. If among a profuſion of beauties I durſt venture to point out the moſt ſtriking beauties of the ſixth Book, I ſhould perhaps obſerve, 1. That after accompanying the hero through the ſilent realms of Night and Chaos, we ſee, with aſtoniſhment and pleaſure, a new creation burſting upon us. 2. That we examine, with a delight which ſprings from the love of virtue, the juſt empire of Minos, in which the apparent irregularities of the preſent ſyſtem are corrected; where the patriot who died for his country is happy, and the tyrant who oppreſſed it is miſerable. 3. As we intereſt ourſelves in the hero's fortunes, we ſhare his feelings :—the melancholy Palinurus, the wretched Deiphobus, the indignant Dido, the Græcian kings, who tremble at his preſence, and the venerable Anchiſes, who embraces his pious ſon, and diſplays to his ſight the future glories of his race: all theſe objects affect us with a variety of pleaſing ſenſations.

" Let us for a moment obey the mandate of our great Critic, and conſider theſe aweful ſcenes as a mimic ſhew, exhibited in the Temple of Ceres, by the contrivance of the prieſt, or, if he pleaſes, of the legiſlator. Whatever was animated (I appeal to every reader of taſte) whatever was terrible, or whatever was pathetic, evaporates into lifeleſs allegory.

——— Tenuem ſine viribus umbram.
——————— Dat inania verba,
Dat ſine mente ſonum, greſſuſque effingit euntis.

The end of philoſophy is truth; the end of poetry is pleaſure. I willingly adopt any interpretation which adds new beauties to the original; I aſſiſt in perſuading myſelf that it is juſt, and could almoſt ſhew the ſame indulgence to the Critic's as to the Poet's fiction. But ſhould a grave Doctor lay out fourſcore pages in explaining away the ſenſe and ſpirit of Virgil, I ſhould have every inducement to believe that Virgil's ſoul was very different from the Doctor's."

Having ſhewn, in this ſpirited manner, how far the hypotheſis of the Critic is inconſiſtent with particular paſſages, and with the general character of the Poet, the Eſſayiſt proceeds to alledge " two ſimple

reaſons, which perſuade him that Virgil has not revealed the ſecret of the Eleuſinian myſteries: the firſt is *his ignorance*, and the ſecond *his diſcretion*." The author then proves, by very ingenious hiſtorical arguments, 1ſt, That it is probable the Poet was never initiated himſelf; and, 2dly, That if he were ſo, it is more probable that he would not have violated the laws both of religion and of honour, in betraying the ſecret of the Myſteries; particularly, as that ſpecies of profanation is mentioned with abhorrence by a cotemporary Poet,

——————Vetabo, qui Cereris ſacrum
Vulgârit arcanæ, ſub iiſdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum
Solvat phaſelum.

HOR. l. iii. od. 2.

When Horace compoſed the Ode which contains the preceding paſſage, "the Æneid (continues my author) and particularly the ſixth Book, were already known to the public *. The deteſtation of the wretch who reveals the Myſteries of Ceres, though expreſſed in general terms, muſt be applied by all Rome to the author of the ſixth Book of the Æneid. Can we ſeriouſly ſuppoſe that Horace would have branded with ſuch wanton infamy one of the men in the world, whom he loved and honoured the moſt †?

"Nothing remains to ſay, except that Horace was himſelf ignorant of his friend's allegorical meaning; which the Biſhop of Glouceſter has ſince revealed to the world. It may be ſo; yet, for my own part, I ſhould be very well ſatisfied with underſtanding Virgil no better than Horace did."

Such is the forcible reaſoning of this ingenious and ſpirited writer. I have been tempted to tranſcribe theſe conſiderable portions of his Work, by an idea (perhaps an ill-founded one) that the circulation of his little Pamphlet has not been equal to its merit. But if it has been in any degree neglected by our country, it has not eſcaped

* Donat. in Virgil. Propert. l. ii. el. xxv. v. 66.
† Hor. l. i. od. 3. l. i. ſerm. v. ver. 39, &c.

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the reſearches, or wanted the applauſe, of a learned and judicious foreigner. Profeſſor Heyne, the late accurate and accompliſhed Editor of Virgil, has mentioned it, in his Comments to the ſixth Book of the Æneid, with the honour it deſerves. He remarks, indeed, that the Author has cenſured the learned Prelate with ſome little acrimony; "Paullo acrius quam velis." But what lover of poetry, unbiaſſed by perſonal connection, can ſpeak of Warburton without ſome marks of indignation? If I have alſo alluded to this famous Commentator with a contemptuous aſperity, it ariſes from the perſuaſion that he has ſullied the page of every Poet whom he pretended to illuſtrate; and that he frequently degraded the uſeful and generous profeſſion of Criticiſm into a mean inſtrument of perſonal malignity: or (to uſe the more forcible language of his greateſt antagoniſt) that he "inveſted himſelf in the high office of Inquiſitor General and Supreme Judge of the Opinions of the Learned; which he aſſumed and exerciſed with a ferocity and deſpotiſm without example in the Republic of Letters, and hardly to be paralleled among the diſciples of Dominic *." It is the juſt lot of tyrants to be deteſted; and of all uſurpers, the literary deſpot is the leaſt excuſable, as he has not the common tyrannical plea of neceſſity or intereſt to alledge in his behalf; for the prevalence of *his edicts* will be found to ſink in proportion to the arbitrary tone with which they are pronounced. The fate of Warburton is a ſtriking inſtance of this important truth. What havock has the courſe of very few years produced in that pile of imperious criticiſm which he had heaped together! Many of his notes on Shakeſpeare have already reſigned their place to the ſuperior comments of more accompliſhed Critics; and perhaps the day is not far diſtant, when the volumes of Pope himſelf will ceaſe to be a repoſitory for the lumber of his friend. The ſevereſt enemies of Warburton muſt indeed allow, that ſeveral of his remarks on his Poetical Patron are entitled to preſervation, by their uſe or beauty; but the greater part, I apprehend, are equally deſtitute of both: and how far the Critic was capable of diſgracing the Poet, muſt be evident to every reader who recollects that the nonſenſe in the Eſſay on Criticiſm, where

* Letter to Warburton by a late Profeſſor, &c. page 9. 2d edition.

Pegaſus is made to *ſnatch a grace*, which is juſtly cenſured by Dr. Warton, was firſt introduced into the poem by an arbitrary tranſpoſition of the editor.

Though arrogance is perhaps the moſt ſtriking and characteriſtical defect in the compoſition of this aſſuming Commentator, he had certainly other critical failings of conſiderable importance; and it may poſſibly be rendering ſome little ſervice to the art which he profeſſed, to inveſtigate the peculiarities in this ſingular writer, which conſpire to plunge him in the crowd of thoſe *evaneſcent critics* (if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion) whom his friend Pope beheld in ſo clear a viſion, that he ſeems to have given us a prophetical portrait of his own Commentator.

> Critics I ſaw, that others' names efface,
> And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
> Their own, like others', ſoon their place reſign'd,
> Or diſappear'd, and left the firſt behind.

I ſhall therefore hazard a few farther obſervations, not only on this famous Critic of our age and country, but on the two greater names of antiquity, to each of whom he has been declared ſuperior by the partial voice of enthuſiaſtic friendſhip. I wiſh not to offend his moſt zealous adherents; and, though I cannot but conſider him as a literary uſurper, I ſpeak of him as a great Hiſtorian ſaid of more exalted tyrants, ſine ira et ſtudio, quorum cauſas procul habeo.——There ſeem to be three natural endowments requiſite in the formation of an accompliſhed critic;—ſtrong underſtanding, lively imagination, and refined ſenſibility. The firſt was the characteriſtic of Ariſtotle, and by the conſent of all ages he is allowed to have poſſeſſed it in a ſuperlative degree. May I be pardoned for the opinion, that he enjoyed but a very moderate portion of the *other two?* I would not abſolutely ſay that he had neither Fancy nor Feeling; but that his imagination was *not brilliant*, and that his ſenſibility was not exquiſite, may I think be fairly preſumed from the general tenor of his proſe; nor does the little relique of his poetry contradict the idea. The two qualities in which Ariſtotle may be ſuppoſed defective, were the very two which peculiarly diſtinguiſh Longinus; who certainly wanted not underſtanding, though he might not poſſeſs the philoſophi-

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cal ſagacity of the Stagyrite. When conſidered in every point of view, he appears the moſt conſummate character among the Critics of antiquity. If Warburton wore any reſemblance to either of theſe mighty names, I apprehend it muſt be to the former, and perhaps in imagination he was ſuperior to Ariſtotle; but, of the three qualities which I have ventured to conſider as requiſite in the perfect Critic, I conceive him to have been miſerably deficient in the laſt, and certainly the moſt eſſential of the three; for, as the great Commentator of Horace has philoſophically and truly remarked, in a note to that Poet, "Feeling, or Sentiment, is not only the ſureſt, but the ſole ultimate arbiter of works of genius *." A man may poſſeſs an acute underſtanding and a lively imagination, without being a ſound Critic; and this truth perhaps cannot be more clearly ſhewn than in the writings of Warburton. His underſtanding was undoubtedly acute, his imagination was lively; but Imagination and Sentiment are by no means ſynonymous; and he certainly wanted thoſe finer feelings which conſtitute accuracy of diſcernment, and a perfect perception of literary excellence. In conſequence of this defect, inſtead of ſeizing the real ſenſe and intended beauties of an author, he frequently followed the caprices of his own active fancy, which led him in queſt of ſecret meanings and myſterious alluſions; theſe he readily found, and his powers of underſtanding enabled him to dreſs them up in a plauſible and ſpecious form, and to perſuade many readers that he was (what he believed himſelf to be) the reſtorer of genuine Criticiſm. As a farther proof that he was deſtitute of refined ſenſibility, I might alledge the peculiarity of his diction, which, as Dr. Johnſon has very juſtly remarked, is coarſe and impure. Perhaps it may be found, that in proportion as authors have enjoyed the quality which I ſuppoſe him to have wanted, they have been more or leſs diſtinguiſhed by the eaſe, the elegance, and the beauty of their language: were I required to fortify this conjecture by examples, I ſhould produce the names of Virgil and Racine, of Fenelon and Addiſon—that Addiſon, who, though inſulted by the Commentator of Pope with the names of an indifferent Poet and a worſe Critic, was, I think, as much ſuperior to his inſulter in critical taſte, and in ſolidity of judgment, as he con-

* Notes on the Epiſtle to Auguſtus, ver. 210.

feſſedly

ſeſſedly was in the harmony of his ſtyle, and in all the finer graces of beautiful compoſition.

NOTE VI. VERSE 257.

'Tis ſaid by one, who, with this candid claim,
Has gain'd no fading wreath of critic fame.] Theſe, and the ſix ſubſequent lines, allude to the following paſſage in Dr. Warton's Eſſay on Pope. "I conclude theſe reflections with a remarkable fact. In no poliſhed nation, after Criticiſm has been much ſtudied, and the rules of writing eſtabliſhed, has any very extraordinary work ever appeared. This has viſibly been the caſe in Greece, in Rome, and in France, after Ariſtotle, Horace, and Boileau had written their Arts of Poetry. In our own country, the rules of the Drama, for inſtance, were never more completely underſtood than at preſent; yet what unintereſting, though faultleſs, Tragedies have we lately ſeen? ſo much better is our judgment than our execution. How to account for the fact here mentioned, adequately and juſtly, would be attended with all thoſe difficulties that await diſcuſſions relative to the productions of the human mind, and to the delicate and ſecret cauſes that influence them; whether or no the natural powers be not confined and debilitated by that timidity and caution which is occaſioned by a rigid regard to the dictates of art; or whether that philoſophical, that geometrical, and ſyſtematical ſpirit ſo much in vogue, which has ſpread itſelf from the ſciences even into polite literature, by conſulting only *reaſon*, has not diminiſhed and deſtroyed *ſentiment*, and made our poets write from and to the *head*, rather than the heart; or whether, laſtly, when juſt models, from which the rules have neceſſarily been drawn, have once appeared, ſucceeding writers, by vainly and ambitiouſly ſtriving to ſurpaſs thoſe juſt models, and to ſhine and ſurpriſe, do not become ſtiff and forced, and affected in their thoughts and diction." Warton's Eſſay, page 209, 3d edition.——I admire this ingenious and modeſt reaſoning; but, for the honour of that ſeverer art, which this pleaſing writer has the happy talent to enliven and embelliſh, I will venture to ſtart ſome doubts concerning the fact itſelf for which he endeavours to account. Perhaps our acquaintance with thoſe writings of Greece and Rome, which were ſubſequent to Ariſtotle and Horace, is not ſufficiently perfect to decide the point either way in reſpect

to thoſe countries. But with regard to France, may we not aſſert, that her poetical productions, which aroſe after the publication of Boileau's Didactic Eſſay, are at leaſt equal, if not ſuperior, to thoſe which preceded that period? If the Henriade of Voltaire is not a fine Epic poem, it is allowed to be the beſt which the French have to boaſt; not to mention the dramatic works of that extraordinary and univerſal author. If this remarkable fact may indeed be found true, I ſhould rather ſuppoſe it to ariſe from the irritable nature of the poetic ſpirit, ſo peculiarly averſe to reſtraint and controul. The Bard who could gallop his Pegaſus over a free and open plain, might be eager to engage in ſo pleaſing an exerciſe; but he who obſerved the direction-poſts ſo thickly and ſo perverſely planted, that, inſtead of aſſiſting his career, they muſt probably occaſion his fall, would eaſily be tempted to deſcend from his ſteed, and to decline the courſe. Let me illuſtrate this conjecture by a ſtriking fact, in the very words of the Poet juſt mentioned, who was by no means deficient in poetical confidence, and who has left us the following anecdote of himſelf, in that pleaſing little anonymous work entitled, Commentaire Hiſtorique ſur les Oeuvres de l'Auteur de la Henriade. "Il lut un jour pluſieurs chants de ce poeme chez le jeune Préſident de Maiſons, ſon intime ami. On l'impatienta par des objections; il jetta ſon manuſcrit dans le feu. Le Préſident Hénaut l'en retira avec peine. "Souvenez vous (lui dit Mr. Hénaut) dans une de ſes lettres, que c'eſt moi qui ai ſauvé la Henriade, et qu'il m'en a couté une belle paire de manchettes."

To return to the Eſſay on Pope.—I rejoice that the amiable Critic has at length obliged the public with the concluſion of his moſt engaging and ingenious work: he has the ſingular talent to inſtruct and to pleaſe even thoſe readers who are moſt ready to revolt from the opinion which he endeavours to eſtabliſh; and he has in ſome degree atoned for that exceſs of ſeverity which his firſt volume diſcovered, and which ſunk the reputation of Pope in the eyes of many, who judge not for themſelves, even far below that mortifying level to which he meant to reduce it. Had Pope been alive, to add this ſpirited eſſay to the bundle of writings againſt himſelf which he is ſaid to have collected, he muſt have felt, that, like the dagger of Brutus, it gave the moſt painful blow, from the character of the aſſailant:

"All

" All the conſpirators, ſave only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæſar;
He, only, in a general honeſt thought,
And common good to all, made one of them."

Yet Pope aſcended not the throne of Poetry by uſurpation, but was ſeated there by a legal title; of which I ſhall ſpeak farther in a ſubſequent note.

NOTE VII. VERSE 359.

His hallow'd ſubject, by that Law forbid,
Might ſtill have laid in ſilent darkneſs hid.] Boileau's Art of Poetry made its firſt appearance in 1673, ſix years after the publication of Paradiſe Loſt. The verſes of the French Poet to which I have particularly alluded are theſe:

C'eſt donc bien vainement que nos auteurs décus,
Banniſſant de leurs vers ces ornemens reçus,
Penſent faire agir Dieu, ſes ſaints, et ſes prophetes,
Comme ces dieux éclos du cerveau des Poëtes;
Mettent à chaque pas le lecteur en enfer;
N'offrent rien qu'Aſtaroth, Belzebuth, Lucifer.
De la foi d'un Chrétien les myſteres terribles
D'ornemens egayés, ne ſont point ſuſceptibles.
L'Evangile à l'eſprit n'offre de tous côtés
Que penitence à faire, et tourmens merités:
Et de vos fictions le mêlange coupable,
Même à ſes vérités donne l'air de la fable.
Et quel objet enfin à preſenter aux yeux
Que le Diable toujours hurlant contre les cieux,
Qui de votre héros veut rabaiſſer la gloire,
Et ſouvent avec Dieu balance la victoire.

Poetique de DESPREAUX, chant iii. ver. 193, &c.

The preceding lines, which are ſaid to have been levelled at the Clovis of Deſmaretz, appear ſo pointed againſt the ſubject of Milton, that we might almoſt believe them intended as a ſatire on our divine Bard. There

There is nothing in Boileau's admirable Didactic Eſſay ſo liable to objection as the whole paſſage concerning Epic poetry. His patronage of the old Pagan divinities, and his oblique recommendation of Claſſical heroes, are alike exceptionable. Even a higher name than Boileau has failed in framing precepts for the Epic Muſe. The maxims delivered by Taſſo himſelf, in his Diſcourſe on Epic poetry, are ſo far from perfect, that an agreeable and judicious French critic has very juſtly ſaid of him, "S'il eût mis ſa theorie en pratique, ſon poeme n'auroit pas tant de charmes *." I am not ſo vain as to think of ſucceeding in the point where theſe immortal authors have failed; and I muſt beg my reader to remember, that the preſent work is by no means intended as a code of laws for the Epic poet; it is not my deſign

To write receipts how poems may be made.

For I think the writer who would condeſcend to frame this higher ſpecies of compoſition according to the exact letter of any directions whatever, may be moſt properly referred to that admirable receipt for an Epic poem with which Martinus Scriblerus will happily ſupply him. My ſerious deſire is to examine and refute the prejudices which have produced, as I apprehend, the neglect of the Heroic Muſe: I wiſh to kindle in our Poets a warmer ſenſe of national honour, with ambition to excel in the nobleſt province of poeſy. If my eſſay ſhould excite that generous enthuſiaſm in the breaſt of any young poetic genius, ſo far from wiſhing to confine him by any arbitrary dictates of my own imagination, I ſhould rather ſay to him, in the words of Dante's Virgil,

Non aſpettar mio dir più, nè mio cenno
Libero, dritto, ſano è tuo arbitrio,
E fallo fora non fare a ſuo ſenno.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 377.

Who ſcorn'd all limits to his work aſſign'd,
Save by th' inſpiring God who rul'd his mind.] "On foot, with a lance in his hand, the Emperor himſelf led the ſolemn proceſſion, and directed

* Marmontel Poetique Françoiſe.

the line, which was traced as the boundary of the deſtined capital; till the growing circumference was obſerved with aſtoniſhment by the aſſiſtants, who at length ventured to obſerve, that he had already exceeded the moſt ample meaſure of a great city. "I ſhall ſtill advance," replied Conſtantine, "till he, the inviſible guide who marches before me, thinks proper to ſtop."

GIBBON, Vol. II. page 11.

END OF THE NOTES TO THE FIRST EPISTLE.

NOTES

NOTES

TO THE

SECOND EPISTLE.

NOTE I. VERSE 28.

WE ſee thy fame traduc'd by Gallic wit.] Homer, like moſt tranſcendent characters, has found detractors in every age. We learn from a paſſage in the life of Socrates by Diogenes Laertius, that the great Poet had, in his life-time, an adverſary named Sagaris, or Syagrus; and his calumniator Zoilus is proverbially diſtinguiſhed. In the Greek Anthologia, there is a ſepulchral inſcription on a ſlanderer of the ſovereign Bard, which, for its enthuſiaſtic ſingularity, I ſhall preſent to the reader.

Εις Παρθενιον Φωκαεα εις Ομηρον παροινησαντα.

Ει και υπο χθονι κειται, ομως ετι και κατα πισσαν
Τω μιαρογλωσσω χευατε Παρθενιω,
Ουνεκα Πιεριδεσσιν ενημεσε μυρια κεινα
Φλεγματα, και μυσαρων απλυσιην ελεγων.
Ηλασε και μανιης επι δη τοσον, ωστ' αγορευσαι
Πηλον Οδυσσηην και βατον Ιλιαδα.
Τοιγαρ υποζοφιαισιν Ερινυσιν αμμεσον ηπται
Κωκυτω, κλοιω λαιμον απαγχομενος.

Anthologia, p. 70. Edit. Oxon. 1766.

On Parthenius the Phocenſian, who calumniated Homer.

Here, though deep buried he can rail no more,
Pour burning pitch, on baſe Parthenius pour;
Who on the ſacred Muſes dar'd to ſpirt
His frothy venom and poetic dirt:
Who ſaid of Homer, in his frantic ſcorn,
The Odyſſey was mud, the Iliad thorn:
For this, dark Furies, in your ſnakes enroll,
And through Cocytus drag the ſland'rous ſoul.

Parthenius, ſay the Commentators, was a diſciple of Dionyſius of Alexandria, who flouriſhed under Nero and Trajan. Erycius, the author of the inſcription, is ſuppoſed to have lived in the ſame age. Among the modern adverſaries of Homer, the French are moſt remarkable for their ſeverity and injuſtice: nor is it ſurpriſing, that the nation which has diſplayed the fainteſt ſparks of Epic fire, ſhould be the moſt ſolicitous to reduce the oppreſſive ſplendor of this exalted luminary. The moſt depreciating remarks on genius, in every walk, are generally made by thoſe who are the leaſt able to prove its rivals; and often, perhaps, not ſo much from the prevalence of envious malignity, as from the want of vivid and delicate perception. The merits and the failings of Homer were agitated in France with all the heat and acrimony of a theological diſpute. Madame Dacier diſtinguiſhed herſelf in the conteſt by her uncommon talents and erudition: ſhe combated for the Grecian Bard with the ſpirit of Minerva defending the Father of the Gods. It muſt however be confeſt, that ſhe ſometimes overſtepped the modeſty of wiſdom, and caught, unwarily, the ſcolding tone of Juno. It is indeed amuſing, to obſerve a people, who pique themſelves on their extreme politeneſs, and cenſure Homer for the groſs behaviour of his Gods, engaging among themſelves in a ſquabble concerning this very Poet, with all the unrefined animoſity of his Olympian Synod. In the whole controverſy there is nothing more worthy of remembrance and of praiſe, than the lively elegance and the pleaſing good-humour of Mr. de la Motte, who, though not one of the moſt exalted, was certainly one of the moſt amiable, characters in the literary world; and made a generous return to the ſeverity of his female antagoniſt, by writing an ode in her praiſe.

Voltaire

Voltaire has pointed out, with his uſual ſpirit, the failings of La Motte in his Abridgement of the Iliad; but he has frequently fallen himſelf into ſimilar defects, and is equally unjuſt to Homer, againſt whom he has levelled the moſt bitter ſarcaſms, both in proſe and verſe. Voltaire attacking Homer, is like Paris ſhooting his arrow at the heel of Achilles: the two Poets are as unequal as the two ancient Warriors; yet Homer, like Achilles, may have his vulnerable ſpot; but with this happy difference, that although the ſhaft of ridicule, which is pointed againſt him, may be tinged with venom, its wound cannot be mortal. Perhaps no better anſwer can be made to all thoſe who amuſe themſelves with writing againſt Homer, than the following reply of Madame Dacier to the Abbé Terraſſon, who had attacked her favourite Bard in two abuſive volumes:—"Que Monſieur l'Abbé Terraſſon trouve Homere ſot, ridicule, extravagant, ennuyeux, c'eſt ſon affaire, le public jugera ſi c'eſt un defaut à Homere de deplaire à M. l'Abbé Terraſſon, ou à M. l'Abbé Terraſſon de ne pas gouter Homere."

NOTE II. VERSE 85.

E'en Socrates himſelf, that pureſt Sage,
Imbib'd his Wiſdom from thy moral page.] Dio Chryſoſtom, in one of his orations, has called Socrates the diſciple of Homer, and drawn a ſhort parallel of their reſpective merits; obſerving in honour of both, "Ομηρος Ποιητης γεγονεν οιος ουδεις αλλος, Σωκρατης δε Φιλοσοφος."

DION. CHRYS. p. 559.

NOTE III. VERSE 119.

How high ſoe'er ſhe leads his daring flight, &c.] I mean not to injure the dignity of Pindar by this aſſertion. Though Quinctilian, in drawing the character of the Grecian Lyric Poets, has given him high pre-eminence in that choir, we may, I think, very fairly conjecture that ſome odes of Alcæus and Steſichorus were not inferior to thoſe of the Theban Bard, who is ſaid to have been repeatedly vanquiſhed in a poetical conteſt by his female antagoniſt Corinna. The abſurd jealouſy of our ſex concerning literary talents, has led ſome eminent writers to queſtion the merits of Corinna, as Olearius has obſerved, in his Diſſertation on the female Poets of Greece. But her glory ſeems to have been fully eſtabliſhed by

by the public memorial of her picture, exhibited in her native city, and adorned with a ſymbol of her victory. Pauſanias, who ſaw it, ſuppoſes her to have been one of the handſomeſt women of her time; and the ingenuity of ſome Critics imputes her ſucceſs in the poetical conteſt to the influence of her beauty. They have taken ſome liberties leſs pardonable with her literary reputation, and, by their curious comments on a ſingle Greek ſyllable, made the ſublime Pindar call his fair rival *a Sow*, though the unfortunate word συνεκαλει, which may be twiſted into that meaning, ſignifies, in its more obvious conſtruction, that the Poet challenged his ſucceſsful antagoniſt to a new trial of ſkill. — For a more minute account of this ſingular piece of criticiſm, I muſt refer the reader to the notes on Corinna, in the Fragmenta Poetriarum, by Wolfius. Time has left us only a few diminutive ſcraps of Corinna's Poetry; but Plutarch, in his Treatiſe on the Glory of the Athenians, has preſerved one of her critical Bon-mots, which may deſerve to be repeated. That author aſſerts, that Corinna inſtructed Pindar in his youth, and adviſed him to adorn his compoſition with the embelliſhments of fable. The obedient Poet ſoon brought her ſome verſes, in which he had followed her advice rather too freely; when his Tutreſs, ſmiling at his profuſion, τη χειρι δειν εφη σπειρειν, αλλα μη ολω τω θυλακω.

NOTE IV. VERSE 126.

Yet may not Judgment, with ſevere diſdain,
Slight the young Rhodian's variegated ſtrain.] Apollonius, ſurnamed the Rhodian from the place of his reſidence, is ſuppoſed to have been a native of Alexandria; where he is ſaid to have recited ſome portion of his Poem, while he was yet a youth. Finding it ill received by his countrymen, he retired to Rhodes, where he is conjectured to have poliſhed and completed his Work, ſupporting himſelf by the profeſſion of Rhetoric, and receiving from the Rhodians the freedom of their city. He at length returned, with conſiderable honour, to the place of his birth, ſucceeding Eratoſthenes in the care of the Alexandrian Library, in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, who aſcended the throne of Egypt in the year before Chriſt 246. That prince had been

educated by the famous Ariſtarchus, and rivalled the preceding ſovereigns of his liberal family in the munificent encouragement of learning. Apollonius was a diſciple of the poet Callimachus; but their connection ended in the moſt violent enmity, which was probably owing to ſome degree of contempt expreſſed by Apollonius for the light compoſitions of his maſter. The learned have vainly endeavoured to diſcover the particulars of their quarrel. — The only Work of Apollonius which has deſcended to modern times, is his Poem, in four Books, on the Argonautic expedition. Both Longinus and Quintilian have aſſigned to this Work the mortifying character of Mediocrity; but there lies an appeal from the ſentence of the moſt candid and enlightened Critics to the voice of Nature; and the merit of Apollonius has little to apprehend from the deciſion of this ultimate judge. His Poem abounds in animated deſcription, and in paſſages of the moſt tender and pathetic beauty. How finely painted is the firſt ſetting forth of the Argo! and how beautifully is the wife of Chiron introduced, holding up the little Achilles in her arms, and ſhewing him to his father Peleus as he ſailed along the ſhore! But the chief excellence in our Poet, is the ſpirit and delicacy with which he has delineated the paſſion of love in his Medea. That Virgil thought very highly of his merit in this particular is ſufficiently evident from the minute exactneſs with which he has copied many tender touches of the Grecian Poet. Thoſe who compare the third Book of Apollonius with the fourth of Virgil, may, I think, perceive not only that Dido has ſome features of Medea, but that the two Bards, however different in their reputation, reſembled each other in their genius; and that they both excel in delicacy and pathos.

NOTE V. VERSE 190.

Virgil ſinks loaded with their heavy praiſe.] Scaliger appears to be the moſt extravagant of all the Critics who have laviſhed their undiſtinguiſhing encomiums on Virgil, by aſſerting that he alone is entitled to the name of Poet. Poetices, lib. iii. c. 2. — Though the opinion of Spence, and other modern Critics, concerning the character of Æneas, conſidered as an allegorical portrait of Auguſtus, ſeems to gain ground, yet it might perhaps be eaſy to overturn the ingenious conjectures and

and the fanciful reaſoning by which that idea has been ſupported. This attempt would have the ſanction of one of the moſt judicious Commentators of Virgil; for the learned Heyne expreſsly rejects all allegorical interpretation, and thinks it improbable that a Poet of ſo correct a judgment could have adopted a plan which muſt neceſſarily contract and cramp his powers. He even ventures to aſſert, that if the character of Æneas was delineated as an allegorical portrait of Auguſtus, the execution of it is unhappy. The ſtrongeſt argument which has been adduced to ſupport this conjecture, is founded on the ingenious interpretation of the following paſſage in the opening of the third Georgic:

Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita ſuperſit,
Aonio rediens deducam vertice Muſas:
Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas;
Et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
Mincius, et tenerâ prætexit arundine ripas.
In medio mihi Cæſar erit, templumque tenebit, &c.

Theſe lines, in which Virgil expreſſes his intention of dedicating a temple to Auguſtus, have been conſidered as the *nobleſt allegory of ancient Poetry* *; and the great Critic who firſt ſtarted the idea, has expatiated, in the triumph of his diſcovery, on the *myſterious* beauties they contain: but the whole of this hypotheſis is unfortunately built upon the rejection of three verſes, which are pronounced unworthy of the Poet, and which, though found in every MS. the Critic claims a right of removing. A licence ſo extraordinary cannot even be juſtified by the talents of this accompliſhed writer; for if the leſs elegant paſſages of the ancient Poets might be removed at pleaſure, their compoſitions would be expoſed to the caprice of every fantaſtic commentator. The obvious and literal interpretation not only renders this violence unneceſſary, but is more agreeable to the judgment of the Poet and the man-

* Hurd's Horace, vol. ii. page 44.

ners

ners of his age. The cuſtom of erecting real temples was ſo familiar to antiquity, that a Roman would never have ſuſpected the edifice was to be raiſed only with poetical materials. We may even conjecture, from a line of Statius, that the Poet himſelf had a temple erected to his memory; and, without any breach of probability, we may admit his intention of giving his living Emperor ſuch a teſtimony of his gratitude. This adulation, though ſhocking to us, was too generally juſtified by example to oblige the Poet to palliate it by a fiction. He had before acquieſced in the divinity of his Imperial Patron, and had expreſſed the idea in its full ſenſe.

> Namque erit ille mihi ſemper *Deus*, illius aram
> Sæpe tener noſtris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
>
> Eclog. I.

> Ingredere et votis jam *nunc* aſſueſce vocari.
>
> Georg. I.

Having made ſuch an invocation in the beginning of his Work, was his *delicacy* afterwards to be ſhocked, and oblige him to pay a compliment under the diſguiſe of an obſcure conceit? for that allegory muſt be allowed to be obſcure, which had remained through ſo many ages unexplained. The unfortunate rejected lines, for whoſe elegance we do not contend, may at leaſt be reſcued from impropriety by a literal interpretation of the preceding paſſage; for, diſmiſs the conjectured allegory, and the chief objections againſt them remain no longer. If the phraſeology be peculiar, it is at leaſt ſupported by concurring MSS. The adjective *ardens* is ſometimes undoubtedly joined to a word that does not denote a ſubſtance of heat or flame, as the Critic himſelf admits in the caſe of *ardentes hoſtes*, to which we may add the *verbum ardens* of Cicero. As to the line which is ſaid to contain the moſt glaring note of illegitimacy,

> Tithoni primâ quot abeſt ab origine Cæſar,

many reaſons might induce the Poet to uſe the name of Tithonus, which at this diſtance of time it is not eaſy for us to conjecture. Per-

haps he choſe it to vary the expreſſion of *Aſſaraci Proles*, which he had adopted in the preceding lines. The abſurdity of the ſubject-matter, and the place in which it is introduced, that are inſiſted on as the principal objections, ariſe ſolely from the allegorical hypotheſis: without it the conſtruction will be plain and natural. The Poet expreſſes his intention of erecting a temple to Auguſtus, and expatiates on the magnificence with which it was to be adorned: he then returns to his preſent poetical ſubject;

Interea Dryadum ſylvas ſaltuſque ſequamur:

and, having dwelt a little on that, to avoid too long a digreſſion, very naturally reſumes the praiſes of the Emperor, by alluding to the ſublimer ſong which he intended to devote to him *hereafter*.

Mox tamen ardentes accingar dicere pugnas
Cæſaris. ———

Perhaps the important poſition that gave riſe to this conjecture, and to others of a ſimilar complexion, "that the propriety of allegorical compoſition made the diſtinguiſhed pride of ancient poetry," is as queſtionable as the conjecture itſelf; and a diligent and judicious peruſal of the ancient Poets might convince us, that ſimplicity was their genuine character, and that many of their allegorical beauties have originated in the fertile imagination of their commentators. Ariſtarchus, indeed, the celebrated model of ancient criticiſm, rejected with great ſpirit the allegorical interpretations of Homer, as we are informed by Euſthathius; but the good Archbiſhop of Theſſalonica, who, like ſome modern prelates, had a paſſion for allegory, cenſures the great Critic of Alexandria for his more ſimple mode of conſtruction, and ſuppoſes it an injury to the refined beauties and profound wiſdom of the Poet. Ἀριστάρχος μέντοι μηδέν τι τῶν Ὁμήρου . . . ἀλληγορεῖν ἀξιῶν, ἃ μόνον ὑπερβολικόν τι λέγει ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφίας μεγάλης ἀφαιρεῖται τὸν ποιητήν. EUSTH. vol. iii. page 1300.

NOTE VI. VERSE 260.

Shall Hiſtory's pen, to aid his vengeance won.] There is hardly any eminent perſonage of antiquity who has ſuffered more from detraction, both

in his literary and moral character, than the poet Lucan. His fate, indeed, ſeems in all points to have been peculiarly ſevere. His early death, at an age when few Poets have even laid the foundation of their capital work, is itſelf ſufficient to excite our compaſſion and regret; but to periſh by the envious tyranny of Nero, may be conſidered as a bleſſing, when compared with the more cruel misfortune of being branded with infamy in the immortal pages of Tacitus. As I am perſuaded that the great Hiſtorian has inadvertently adopted the groſſeſt calumny againſt our Poet, I ſhall moſt readily aſſign my reaſons for thinking ſo. It may firſt be proper to give a ſhort ſketch of Lucan's life.—He was the ſon of Anneus Mela, the youngeſt brother of Seneca; and though born at Corduba, was conveyed to Rome at the age of eight months: a circumſtance, as his more indulgent critics obſerve, which ſufficiently refutes the cenſure of thoſe who conſider his language as provincial. At Rome he was educated under the Stoic Cornutus, ſo warmly celebrated by his diſciple Perſius the Satiriſt, who was the intimate friend of our Poet. In the cloſe of his education Lucan is ſaid to have paſſed ſome time at Athens. On his return to Rome he roſe to the office of Quæſtor, before he had attained the legal age. He was afterwards inrolled among the Augurs; and married a lady of noble birth, of whoſe amiable character I ſhall ſpeak more at large in a ſubſequent note. Lucan had for ſome time been admitted to familiarity with Nero, when the Emperor choſe to contend for poetical honours by the public recital of a poem he had compoſed on Niobe; and ſome verſes of this imperial production are ſuppoſed to be preſerved in the firſt Satire of Perſius. Lucan had the hardineſs to repeat a poem on Orpheus, in competition with that of Nero; and, what is more remarkable, the judges of the conteſt were juſt and bold enough to decide againſt the Emperor. From hence Nero became the perſecutor of his ſucceſsful rival, and forbade him to produce any poetry in public. The well-known conſpiracy of Piſo againſt the tyrant ſoon followed; and Tacitus, with his uſual ſarcaſtic ſeverity, concludes that Lucan engaged in the enterprize from the poetical injuries he had received: a remark which does little credit to the candour of the Hiſtorian; who might have found a much nobler, and, I will add, a more probable motive for his conduct, in the generous ardor of his character, and his paſſionate adora-

tion of freedom. In the ſequel of his narration, Tacitus alledges a charge againſt our Poet, which, if it were true, muſt lead us to deteſt him as the moſt abject of mankind. The Hiſtorian aſſerts, that Lucan, when accuſed of the conſpiracy, for ſome time denied the charge; but, corrupted at laſt by a promiſe of impunity, and deſirous to atone for the tardineſs of his confeſſion, accuſed his mother Atilla as his accomplice. This circumſtance is ſo improbable in itſelf, and ſo little conſonant to the general character of Lucan, that ſome writers have treated it with contempt, as a calumny invented by Nero to vilify the object of his envious abhorrence. But the name of Tacitus has given ſuch an air of authority to the ſtory, that it may ſeem to deſerve a more ſerious diſcuſſion, particularly as there are two ſubſequent events related by the ſame Hiſtorian, which have a tendency to invalidate the accuſation ſo injurious to our Poet. The events I mean are, the fate of Annæus, and the eſcape of Atilla, the two parents of Lucan. The former died in conſequence of an accuſation brought againſt him, after the death of his ſon, by Fabius Romanus, who had been intimate with Lucan and forged ſome letters in his name, with the deſign of proving his father concerned in the conſpiracy. Theſe letters were produced to Nero, who ſent them to Annæus, from an eager deſire, ſays Tacitus, to get poſſeſſion of his wealth. From this fact two inferences may be drawn, according to the different lights in which it may be conſidered:—If the accuſation againſt Annæus was juſt, it is clear that Lucan had not betrayed his father, and he appears the leſs likely to have endangered by his confeſſion the life of a parent, to whom he owed a ſtill tenderer regard:—If Annæus was not involved in the conſpiracy, and merely put to death by Nero for the ſake of his treaſure, we may the more readily believe, that the tyrant who murdered the father from avarice, might calumniate the ſon from envy. But the eſcape of Atilla affords us the ſtrongeſt reaſon to conclude that Lucan was perfectly innocent of the abject and unnatural treachery, of which Tacitus has ſuppoſed him guilty. Had the Poet really named his mother as his accomplice, would the vindictive and ſanguinary Nero have ſpared the life of a woman, whoſe family he deteſted, particularly when other females were put to death for their ſhare in the conſpiracy? That Atilla was not in that number, the Hiſtorian himſelf informs us in the following remarkable ſentence,

Atilla

Atilla mater Annæi Lucani, ſine abſolutione, ſine ſupplicio, diſſimulata; thus tranſlated by Gordon: "The information againſt Atilla, the mother of Lucan, was diſſembled; and, without being cleared, ſhe eſcaped unpuniſhed."

The preceding remarks will, I hope, vindicate to every candid mind the honour of our Poet; whoſe firmneſs and intrepidity of character are indeed very forcibly diſplayed in that picture of his death which Tacitus himſelf has given us. I ſhall preſent it to the Engliſh reader in the words of Gordon: — Lucan, "while his blood iſſued in ſtreams, perceiving his feet and hands to grow cold and ſtiffen, and life to retire by little and little to the extremities, while his heart was ſtill beating with vital warmth, and his faculties no wiſe impaired, recollected ſome lines of his own, which deſcribed a wounded ſoldier expiring in a manner that reſembled this. The lines themſelves he rehearſed; and they were the laſt words he ever uttered." The Annals of Tacitus, Book xv. — The critics differ concerning the verſes of the Pharſalia which the author quoted in ſo memorable a manner. I ſhall tranſcribe the two paſſages he is ſuppoſed to have repeated, and only add that Lipſius contends for the latter.

Sanguis erant lacrymæ: quæcunque foramina novit
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor: ora redundant,
Et patulæ nares: ſudor rubet: omnia plenis
Membra fluunt venis: totum eſt pro vulnere corpus.
Lib. ix. 814.

Now the warm blood at once, from every part,
Ran purple poiſon down, and drain'd the fainting heart.
Blood falls for tears; and o'er his mournful face
The ruddy drops their tainted paſſage trace.
Where'er the liquid juices find a way,
There ſtreams of blood, there crimſon rivers ſtray.
His mouth and guſhing noſtrils pour a flood,
And e'en the pores ouze out the trickling blood;
In the red deluge all the parts lie drown'd,
And the whole body ſeems one bleeding wound.
ROWE.

Scinditur avulſus; nec ſicut vulnere ſanguis
Emicuit lentus; ruptis cadit undique venis,
Diſcurſuſque animæ, diverſa in membra meantis,
Interceptus aquis.

Lib. iii. v. 638.

No ſingle wound the gaping rupture ſeems,
Where trickling crimſon wells in ſlender ſtreams;
But, from an op'ning horrible and wide,
A thouſand veſſels pour the burſting tide:
At once the winding channel's courſe was broke,
Where wand'ring life her mazy journey took;
At once the currents all forgot their way,
And loſt their purple in the azure ſea.

ROWE.

Such was the death of Lucan, before he had completed his twenty-ſeventh year. If his character as a man has been injured by the Hiſtorian, his poetical reputation has been treated not leſs injuriouſly by the Critics. Quintilian, by a frivolous diſtinction, diſputes his title to be claſſed among the Poets; and Scaliger ſays, with a brutality of language diſgraceful only to himſelf, that he ſeems rather to *bark* than to *ſing*. But theſe inſults may appear amply compenſated, when we remember, that in the moſt poliſhed nations of modern Europe the moſt elevated and poetic ſpirits have been his warmeſt admirers; that in France he was idolized by Corneille, and in England tranſlated by Rowe.—The ſevereſt cenſures on Lucan have proceeded from thoſe who have unfairly compared his language to that of Virgil: but how unjuſt and abſurd is ſuch a compariſon! it is comparing an uneven block of porphyry, taken rough from the quarry, to the moſt beautiful ſuperficies of poliſhed marble. How differently ſhould we think of Virgil as a poet, if we poſſeſſed only the verſes which he wrote at that period of life when Lucan compoſed his Pharſalia! In the diſpoſition of his ſubject, in the propriety and elegance of diction, he is undoubtedly far inferior to Virgil: but if we attend to the bold originality of his deſign, and to the vigour of his ſentiments; if we conſider the Pharſalia as the rapid

rapid and uncorrected ſketch of a young poet, executed in an age when the ſpirit of his countrymen was broken, and their taſte in literature corrupted, it may juſtly be eſteemed as one of the moſt noble and moſt wonderful productions of the human mind.

NOTE VII. VERSE 293.

As Leſbos paid to Pompey's lovely Wife.] Pompey, after his defeat at Pharſalia, proceeded to Leſbos, as he had left his wife Cornelia to the protection of that iſland; which received the unfortunate hero with a ſublime generoſity. The Leſbians entreated him to remain amongſt them, and promiſed to defend him. Pompey expreſſed his gratitude for their fidelity, but declined the offer, and embarked with Cornelia. The concern of this gallant people on the departure of their amiable gueſt is thus deſcribed by Lucan:

——— dixit; mœſtamque carinæ
Impoſuit comitem. Cunctos mutare putares
Tellurem patriæque ſolum: ſic litore toto
Plangitur, infeſtæ tenduntur in æthera dextræ;
Pompeiumque minus, cujus fortuna dolorem
Moverat, aſt illam, quam toto tempore belli
Ut civem videre ſuam, diſcedere cernens
Ingemuit populus; quam vix, ſi caſtra mariti
Victoris peteret, ſiccis dimittere matres
Jam poterant oculis: tanto devinxit amore
Hos pudor, hos probitas, caſtique modeſtia vultus.

Lib. viii. v. 146.

He ceas'd; and to the ſhip his partner bore,
While loud complainings fill the ſounding ſhore;
It ſeem'd as if the nation with her paſs'd,
And baniſhment had laid their iſland waſte.
Their ſecond ſorrows they to Pompey give;
For her as for their citizen they grieve:
E'en though glad victory had call'd her thence,
And her Lord's bidding been the juſt pretence.

The

The Leſbian matrons had in tears been drown'd,
And brought her weeping to their wat'ry bound:
So was ſhe lov'd, ſo winning was her grace,
Such lowly ſweetneſs dwelt upon her face. ROWE.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 296.

Let Argentaria on your canvaſs ſhine.] Polla Argentaria was the daughter of a Roman Senator, and the wife of Lucan. She is ſaid to have tranſcribed and corrected the three firſt books of the Pharſalia, after the death of her huſband. It is much to be regretted that we poſſeſs not the poem which he wrote on the merits of this amiable and accompliſhed woman; but her name is immortalized by two ſurviving Poets of that age. The veneration which ſhe paid to the memory of her huſband, is recorded by Martial; and more poetically deſcribed in that pleaſing and elegant little production of Statius, *Genethliacon Lucani*, a poem which I the more readily commend, as I may be thought by ſome readers unjuſt towards its author, in omitting to celebrate his Thebaid. I confeſs, indeed, the miſcellaneous poems of Statius appear to me his moſt valuable work: in moſt of theſe there is much imagination and ſentiment, in harmonious and ſpirited verſe. The little poem which I have mentioned, on the anniverſary of Lucan's birth, is ſaid to have been written at the requeſt of Argentaria. The Author, after invoking the poetical deities to attend the ceremony, touches with great delicacy and ſpirit on the compoſitions of Lucan's childhood, which are loſt, and the Pharſalia, the production of his early youth; he then pays a ſhort compliment to the beauty and talents of Argentaria, laments the cruel fate which deprived her ſo immaturely of domeſtic happineſs; and concludes with the following addreſs to the ſhade of Lucan:

At tu, ſeu rapidum poli per axem
Famæ curribus arduis levatus,
Qua ſurgunt animæ potentiores,
Terras deſpicis, et ſepulchra rides:
Seu pacis meritum nemus recluſæ
Felix Elyſiis tenes in oris,
Quo Pharſalica turba congregatur;

Et te nobile carmen inſonantem
Pompeii comitantur et Catones:
Tu magna ſacer et ſuperbus umbra
Neſcis Tartaron, et procul nocentum
Audis verbera, pallidumque viſa
Matris lampade reſpicis Neronem.
Adſis lucidus; et vocante Polla
Unum, quæſo, diem deos ſilentum
Exores; ſolet hoc patere limen
Ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.
Hæc te non thiaſis procax doloſis
Falſi numinis induit figuras;
Ipſum ſed colit, et frequentat ipſum
Imis altius inſitum medullis;
Ac ſolatia vana ſubminiſtrat
Vultus, qui ſimili notatus auro
Stratis prænitet, excubatque ſomno
Securæ. Procul hinc abite mortes;
Hæc vitæ genitalis eſt origo;
Cedat luctus atrox, geniſque manent
Jam dulces lacrymæ, dolorque feſtus
Quicquid fleverat ante nunc adoret.

But you, O! whether to the ſkies
On Fame's triumphant car you riſe,
(Where mightier ſouls new life aſſume)
And mock the confines of the tomb;
Or whether in Elyſium bleſt
You grace the groves of ſacred reſt,
Where the Pharſalian heroes dwell;
And, as you ſtrike your Epic ſhell,
The Pompeys and the Catos throng
To catch the animating ſong;
Of Tartarus the dread controul
Binds not your high and hallow'd ſoul;

Diſtant you hear that wailing coaſt,
And ſee the guilty Nero's ghoſt
Grow pale with anguiſh and affright,
His mother flaſhing on his ſight.
Be preſent to your Polla's vows,
While to your honour'd name ſhe bows!
One day let your intreaties gain
From thoſe who rule the ſhadowy train!
Their gates have op'd to bleſs a wife,
And given a huſband back to life.
In you the tender Fair invites
No fancied god with frantic rites;
You are the object of her prayers,
You in her inmoſt heart ſhe bears:
And, ſtampt on mimic gold, your head
Adorns the faithful mourner's bed,
And ſooths her eyes before they cloſe,
The guardian of her chaſte repoſe.
Away with all funereal ſtate!
From hence his nobler life we date:
Let Mourning change the pang ſevere
To fond Devotion's grateful tear!
And feſtal grief, its anguiſh o'er,
What it lamented, now adore!

I cannot cloſe this note without obſerving, that the preceding verſes have a ſtrong tendency to prove, that Lucan was perfectly innocent in regard to the accuſation which I have examined before. Had he been really guilty of baſely endangering the life of his mother, it is not probable that his wife would have honoured his memory with ſuch enthuſiaſtic veneration, or that Statius, in verſes deſigned to do him honour, would have alluded to *the mother* of Nero. The Reader will pardon my recurring to this ſubject, as it is pleaſing to make uſe of every argument which may remove ſo odious and unjuſt a ſtain from a manly and exalted character.

NOTES

TO THE

THIRD EPISTLE.

NOTE I. Verse 36.

AND ſmiles of triumph hid his mortal pang.] An alluſion to *ridens moriar*, the cloſe of the celebrated Northern Ode, by the Daniſh king Regner Lodbrog; a tranſlation of which is inſerted in the curious little volume of Runic poetry, printed for Dodſley, 1763.

Bartholin, in his admirable Eſſay on the Cauſes which inſpired the Danes with a Contempt of Death, affirms, that it was cuſtomary with the Northern warriors to ſing their own exploits in the cloſe of life. He mentions the example of a hero, named Hallmundus, who being mortally wounded, commanded his daughter to attend while he compoſed a poem, and to inſcribe it on a tablet of wood. Bartholin. Lib. i. cap. 10.

NOTE II. Verse 60.

And galls the ghoſtly Tyrant with her laſh.] The poetry of Provence contains many ſpirited ſatires againſt the enormities of the Clergy. The moſt remarkable, is the bold invective of the Troubadour Guillaume Figueira, in which he execrates the avarice and the cruelty of Rome. The Papal cauſe found a female Poet to defend it: Germonda of Montpellier compoſed a poetical reply to the ſatire of Figueira. See Millot's Hiſt. des Troubadours, vol. ii. p. 455.

NOTE III. VERSE 76.

Struck with ill-fated zeal the Latian lyre.] There never was a century utterly deſtitute of ingenious and elegant Poets, ſays the learned Polycarp Leyſer, after having patiently traced the obſcure progreſs of Latin poetry through all the dark ages. Indeed the merit of ſome Latin Poets, in a period that we commonly ſuppoſe involved in the groſſeſt barbariſm, is ſingularly ſtriking; many of theſe are of the Epic kind, and, as they deſcribe the manners and cuſtoms of their reſpective times, a complete review of them might form a curious and entertaining work. I ſhall briefly mention ſuch as appear moſt worthy of notice.

Abbo, a Pariſian monk, of the Benedictine order, wrote a poem on the ſiege of Paris by the Normans and the Danes, at which he was preſent, in the year 886: it is printed in the ſecond volume of Ducheſne's Script. Francorum; and, though it has little or no poetical merit, may be regarded as an hiſtorical curioſity. The following lines, addreſſed to the city of Paris, in the beginning of the work, may ſerve as a ſpecimen of its language:

Dic igitur præpulchra polis, quod Danea munus
Libavit tibimet, ſoboles Plutonis amica,
Tempore quo præſul domini et dulciſſimus heros
Gozlinus temet paſtorque benignus alebat!
Hæc inquit, miror, narrare poteſt aliquiſne?
Nonne tuis idem vidiſti oculis? refer ergo:
Vidi equidem, juſſiſque tuis parebo libenter.

Leyſer has confounded this Poet with another of this name; but Fabricius has corrected the miſtake, in his Bibliotheca Latina mediæ et infimæ Ætatis.

Guido, Biſhop of Amiens from the year 1058 to 1076, wrote an Heroic poem on the exploits of William the Conqueror, in which, according to Ordericus Vitalis, he imitated both Virgil and Statius. William of Apulia compoſed, at the requeſt of Pope Urban the IId, a poem, in five books, on the actions of the Normans in Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria, to the death of Robert Guiſcard their prince; addreſſing his

his work to the ſon of that hero. It was written between the years 1080 and 1099; firſt printed in 1582, 4to; and again in Muratori's Script. Ital. Du Cange, in his Notes to the Alexiad of the Princeſs Anna Comnena, has illuſtrated that hiſtory by frequent and long quotations from William of Apulia; but though the learned Critic gives him the title of Scriptor Egregius, his poetry appears to me but a few degrees ſuperior to that of the Monk Abbo, whom I have juſt mentioned. The Reader may judge from the following paſſage, which I ſelect not only as a ſpecimen of the Author's ſtyle, but as it ſhews that the wives of theſe martial Princes ſhared with them in all the perils of war.

Uxor in hoc bello Roberti forte ſagitta
Quadam læſa fuit, quæ vulnere territa, nullam
Dum ſperabat opem, ſe pene ſubegerat hoſti,
Navigio cujus ſe commendare volebat,
Inſtantis metuens vicina pericula lethi:
Hanc deus eripuit, fieri ludibria nolens
Matronæ tantæ tam nobilis et venerandæ.

The Princeſs Comnena has alſo celebrated the fortitude which this Heroine, whoſe name was Gaita, diſplayed in the battle; and it is remarkable, that the royal female Hiſtorian deſcribes the noble Amazon more poetically than the Latin Poet.

Gualfredo, an Italian, who ſucceeded to the biſhoprick of Siena in the year 1080, and died in 1127, wrote an Heroic poem on the expedition of Godfrey of Boulogne, which is ſaid to be ſtill preſerved in MS. at Siena. I believe Gualfredo is the firſt Poet, in point of time, who treated of the happy ſubject of the Cruſades; which was afterwards embelliſhed by two very elegant writers of Latin verſe, Iſcanus and Gunther, of whom I ſhall preſently ſpeak, and at length received its higheſt honour from the genius of Taſſo. There is alſo an early Latin poem on this ſubject, the joint production of two writers, named Fulco and Ægidius, whom the accurate Fabricius places in the beginning of the 13th century; the title of the work is Hiſtoria Geſtorum Viæ noſtri Temporis Hieroſolymitanæ. It is printed in the fourth volume of Ducheſne's Script. Franc. and with conſiderable additions in the third volume of Anecdota

Anecdota Edmundi Martene. I tranſcribe part of the opening of this poem, as the curious reader may have a pleaſure in comparing it with that of Taſſo.

Ardor ineſt, inquam, ſententia fixaque menti
Verſibus et numeris tranſmittere poſteritati
Qualiter inſtinctu deitatis, et auſpice cultu
Eſt aggreſſa via memorando nobilis actu,
Qua ſacroſancti violantes jura ſepulchri
Digna receperunt meriti commercia pravi.
Inque ſuis Francis antiqua reſurgere Troja
Cœpit, et edomuit Chriſto contraria regna.

I will only add the portrait of Godfrey:

Inclytus ille ducum Godefridus culmen honoſque,
Omnibus exemplum bonitatis militiæque,
Sive haſta jaculans æquaret Parthica tela,
Cominus aut feriens terebraret ferrea ſcuta,
Seu gladio pugnans carnes reſecaret et oſſa,
Sive eques atque pedes propelleret agmina denſa,
Hic inimicitiis cunctis ſibi conciliatis
Cunctis poſſeſſis pro Chriſti pace relictis
Arripuit callem Chriſtum ſectando vocantem.

The poem cloſes with the capture of Jeruſalem.

Laurentius of Verona, who flouriſhed about the year 1120, wrote an Heroic poem, in ſeven books, entitled, Rerum in Majorica Piſanorum. Edidit Ughellus, tom. 3. Italiæ ſacræ.

But in merit and reputation, theſe early Latin Poets of modern time are very far inferior to Philip Gualtier de Chatillon, who ſeems to have been the firſt that caught any portion of true poetic ſpirit in Latin verſe. He was Provoſt of the Canons of Tournay * about the year 1200, according to Mr. Warton, who has given ſome ſpecimens of his ſtyle in the ſecond Diſſertation prefixed to his admirable Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry. I ſhall therefore only add, that the beſt edition of his Alexandreid, an Heroic

* Fabricius calls him Epiſcopus Magalonenſis. Bib. Lat. tom. ii. p. 255.

poem in ten books on Alexander the Great, was printed at Leyden, 4to, 1558.

The ſuperior merit of Joſephus Iſcanus, or Joſeph of Exeter, has been alſo diſplayed by the ſame judicious Encomiaſt, in the Diſſertation I have mentioned; nor has he failed to commemorate two Latin Epic Poets of the ſame period, and of conſiderable merit for the time in which they lived—Gunther, and William of Bretagny; the firſt was a German monk, who wrote after the year 1108, and has left various hiſtorical and poetical works; particularly two of the Epic kind—Solymarium, a poem on the taking of Jeruſalem by Godfrey of Bulloign; and another, entitled Ligurinus, on the exploits of the Emperor Frederick Barbaroſſa, which he completed during the life of that Prince. The firſt was never printed; of the latter there have been ſeveral editions, and one by the celebrated Melancthon, in 1569. That his poetical merit was conſiderable in many reſpects, will appear from the following verſes, in which he ſpeaks of himſelf.

Hoc quoque me famæ, ſi deſint cætera, ſolum
Conciliare poteſt, quod jam per multa latentes
Sæcula, nec clauſis prodire penatibus auſas
Pierides vulgare paro, priſcumque nitorem
Reddere carminibus, tardoſque citare poetas.

William of Bretagny was preceptor to Pierre Charlot, natural ſon of Philip Auguſtus, King of France, and addreſſed a poem to his pupil, entitled Karlotis, which is yet unpubliſhed; but his greater work, called Philippis, an Heroic poem in twelve books, is printed in the collections of Ducheſne and Pithæus; and in a ſeparate 4to volume, with a copious commentary by Barthius. Notwithſtanding the praiſes beſtowed on this Author by his learned Commentator, who prefers him to all his contemporaries, he appears to me inferior in poetic ſpirit to his three rivals, Gualtier de Chatillon, Iſcanus, and Gunther. Yet his work is by no means deſpicable in its ſtyle, and may be conſidered as a valuable picture of the times in which he lived; for he was himſelf engaged in many of the ſcenes which he deſcribes. His profeſt deſign is to celebrate the exploits of Philip Auguſtus; and he cloſes his poem with the death.

death of that Monarch, which happened in 1223. He addreſſes his work, in two ſeparate poetical dedications, to Lewis, the ſucceſſor of Philip, and to Pierre Charlot his natural ſon, who was Biſhop of Noyon in 1240, and died 1249. He ſeems to have been excited to this compoſition by the reputation of Gualtier's Alexandreid; to which he thus alludes, in the verſes addreſſed to Lewis:

Geſta ducis Macedum celebri deſcribere verſu
Si licuit Gualtere tibi, quæ ſola relatu
Multivago docuit te vociferatio famæ.

— — — — —

Cur ego quæ novi, proprio quæ lumine vidi,
Non auſim magni magnalia ſcribere regis,
Qui nec Alexandro minor eſt virtute, nec illo
Urbi Romuleæ totum qui ſubdidit orbem?

He takes occaſion alſo, in two other parts of his poem, to pay a liberal compliment to Gualtier, to whom, in poetical ability, he confeſſes himſelf inferior; but this inferiority his admirer Barthius will not allow. Of their reſpective talents the reader may judge, who will compare the paſſage which Mr. Warton has cited from the Alexandreid, with the following lines, in which William of Bretagny uſes the very ſimile of his predeceſſor, comparing his hero Philip to a young lion.

Rex dolet ereptum comitem ſibi, frendit, et iræ
Occultare nequit tectos ſub pectore motus,
Nam rubor in vultu duplicatus prodit aperte
Quam gravis illuſtrem trahit indignatio mentem.
Qualiter in Lybicis ſpumante leunculo rictu
Saltibus ungue ferox, et dentibus aſper aduncis
Fortis et horriſonis anno jam pene ſecundo,
Cui venatoris venabula forte per armos
Deſcendere levi ſtringentia vulnere corpus,
Colla rigens hirſuta jubis deſævit in hoſtem
Jam retrocedentem, nec eum tetigiſſe volentem,
Cum nihil ex facto referat niſi dedecus illo.

Nec

Nec mora nec requies, quin jam deglutiat ipſum,
Ni prudens hoſtis prætenta cuſpide ſcuto
Unguibus objecto, dum dat veſtigia retro,
In loca ſe retrahat non irrumpenda leoni.
Sic puer in comitem rex debacchatur et ipſum
Subſequitur preſſo relegens veſtigia greſſu.

I will add the following paſſage from the eleventh Book, as it contains an animated portrait, and a ſimile more original than the preceding.

At lævo in cornu, qui nulli marte ſecundus,
Bolonides pugnæ inſiſtit, cui fraxinus ingens
Nunc implet dextram, vix ulli bajula, qualem
In Bacchi legimus portaſſe Capanea cunas,
Quam vix fulmineo dejecit Jupiter ictu:
Nunc culter vitæ impatiens, nunc ſanguine pugni
Mucro rubens; gemina e ſublimi vertice fulgens
Cornua conus agit, ſuperaſque eduxit in auras
E coſtis aſſumpta nigris, quas faucis in antro
Branchia balenæ Britici colit incola ponti;
Ut qui magnus erat magnæ ſuperaddita moli
Majorem faceret phantaſtica pompa videri.
Ac velut in ſaltus ſcopuloſa Bieria ſaltu
Præcipiti mittit ingenti corpore cervum,
Cujus multifidos numerant a cornibus annos,
Menſe ſub Octobri nondum Septembre peracto,
Annua quando novis Venus incitat ignibus illum,
Curſitat in cervos ramoſa fronte minores,
Omnibus ut pulſis victor ſub tegmine fagi
Connubio cervam ſolus ſibi ſubdat amatam.
Haud ſecus e peditum medio, quibus ipſe rotundo
Ut caſtro cauta ſe circumſepſerat arte,
Proſiliens volat in Thomam, Robertigenaſque
Drocarum Comitem, Belvacenumque Philippum
Bolonides.——

William of Bretagny had an immediate ſucceſſor in Latin poetry, who appears to have at leaſt an equal portion of poetical ſpirit; the name of this Author is Nicholas de Brai, who wrote an Heroic poem on the actions of Louis the VIIIth, after the death of that Monarch, and addreſſed it to William of Auvergne, who was Biſhop of Paris from the year 1228 to 1248. As a ſpecimen of his deſcriptive power, I ſelect the following lines, which form part of a long deſcription of a Goblet preſented to the King on his acceſſion:

——— Parant intrare palatia regis
Magnifici cives, gratiſſima dona ferentes,
Tegmina quos ornant variis inſculpta figuris;
Et patrem patriæ jucunda voce ſalutant,
Et genibus flexis præſentant ditia dona.
— — — — —
Offertur crater, quem ſi ſit credere dignum
Perditus ingenio fabricavit Mulciber auro;
Margine crateris totus depingitur orbis,
Et ſeries rerum brevibus diſtincta figuris:
Illic pontus erat, tellus et pendulus aer,
Ignis ad alta volans cœli ſupereminet illis:
Quatuor in partes orbis diſtinguitur, ingens
Circuit oceanus immenſis fluctibus orbem.
Ingenio natura ſuo duo lumina fecit
Fixa tenore poli, mundi famulantia rebus.

The Author proceeds to deſcribe Thebes and Troy, as they are figured on this ſuperb Goblet; and concludes his account of the workmanſhip with the four following lines, of peculiar beauty for the age in which they appeared:

Martis adulterium reſupino margine pinxit
Mulciber, et Venerem laqueis cum Marte ligavit;
Pluraque cælaſſet ſub margine, ſed pudor illi
Obſtat, et ingentis renovatur cauſa doloris.

This

This Poem, which the author ſeems to have left imperfect, is printed in the fifth volume of Ducheſne's Script. Francorum.—England is ſaid to have produced another Heroic Poet of conſiderable merit, who celebrated in Latin verſe the exploits of Richard the Firſt, and who was called Gulielmus Peregrinus, from his having attended that Prince to the Holy Land. Leland mentions him by the name of Gulielmus de Canno, and Pits calls him Poetarum ſui temporis apud noſtrates facile Princeps; but I do not find that his Work was ever printed; nor do the ſeveral biographical writers who ſpeak of him, inform us where it exiſts in MS.

In Italy the Latin language is ſuppoſed to have been cultivated with ſtill greater ſucceſs, and the reſtoration of its purity is in great meaſure aſcribed to Albertino Muſſato, whoſe merits were firſt diſplayed to our country by the learned author of the Eſſay on Pope.—Muſſato was a Paduan, of high rank and great talents, but unfortunate. He died in exile, 1329, and left, beſides many ſmaller Latin pieces, an Heroic Poem, De Geſtis Italorum poſt Henricum VII. Cæſarem, ſeu de Obſidione Domini Canis Grandis de Verona circa mænia Paduanæ civitatis et Conflictu ejus. — Quadrio, from whom I tranſcribe this title, ſays it is printed in the tenth volume of Muratori. Voſſius, who ſpeaks of him as an Hiſtorian, aſſerts that he commanded in the war which is the ſubject of his Poem.

In a few years after the death of Muſſato, Petrarch received the laurel at Rome, for his Latin Epic poem, entitled Africa; a performance which has ſunk ſo remarkably from the high reputation it once obtained, that the great admirer and encomiaſt of Petrarch, who has publiſhed three entertaining quarto volumes on his life, calls it "Un ouvrage ſans chaleur, ſans invention, ſans interet, qui n'a pas meme le merite de la verſification & du ſtyle, & dont il eſt impoſſible de ſoutenir la lecture.— I muſt obſerve, however, that Taſſo, in his Eſſay on Epic Poetry, beſtows a very high encomium on that part of Petrarch's Latin poem in which he celebrates the loves of Sophoniſba and Maſiniſſa; and indeed the cenſure of this amiable French writer, who in other points has done ample juſtice to the merits of Petrarch, appears to me infinitely too ſevere. There are many paſſages in this neglected Poem conceived with great force and imagination, and expreſſed with equal elegance of lan-

guage. I ſhall ſelect ſome verſes from that part of it which has been honoured by the applauſe of Taſſo. The following lines deſcribe the anguiſh of the young Numidian Prince, when he is conſtrained to abandon his lovely bride:

Volvitur inde thoro (quoniam ſub pectore pernox
Sævit amor, lacerantque truces præcordia curæ)
Uritur, invigilant mœror, metus, ira, furorque,
Sæpe & abſentem lacrymans dum ſtringit amicam
Sæpe thoro dedit amplexus, et dulcia verba.
Poſtquam nulla valent violento fræna dolori,
Incipit, et longis ſolatur damna querelis.
Cura mihi nimium, vita mihi dulcior omni
Sophoniſba vale: non te mea cura videbo
Leniter æthereos poſthac componere vultus,
Effuſoſque auro religantem ex more capillos.
Dulcia, non cælum mulcentia verba, Deoſque,
Oris odorati, ſecretaque murmura carpam.
Solus ero gelidoque inſternam membra cubili,
Atque utinam ſocio componat amica ſepulchro,
Et ſimul hic vetitos, illic concorditer annos
Contingat duxiſſe mihi ſors optima buſti.
Si cinis amborum commixtis morte medullis
Unus erit, Scipio noſtros non ſcindet amores.
O utinam infernis etiam nunc una latebris
Umbra ſimus, liceat pariter per clauſtra vagari
Myrtea, nec noſtros Scipio disjungat amores.
Ibimus una ambo flentes, et paſſibus iiſdem
Ibimus, æterno connexi fœdere, nec nos
Ferreus aut æquos Scipio interrumpet amores.

The well-known cataſtrophe of the unfortunate Sophoniſba is related with much poetical ſpirit. The cloſe of her life, and her firſt appearance in the regions of the dead, are peculiarly ſtriking.

Illa manu pateramque tenens, & lumina cœlo
Attollens, Sol alme, inquit, ſuperique valete!

Maſiniſſa

Maſiniſſa vale, noſtri memor: inde malignum
Ceu ſitiens haurit non mota fronte venenum,
Tartareaſque petit violentus ſpiritus umbras.

Nulla magis Stygios mirantum obſeſſa corona
Umbra lacus ſubiit, poſtquam diviſa triformis
Partibus haud æquis ſtetit ingens machina mundi.
Obtuitu attonito ſtabant horrentia circum
Agmina Pœnarum, ſparſoque rigentia villo
Eumenidum tacitis inhiabant rictibus ora.
Regia vis oculis inerat, pallorque verendus
Et vetus egregia majeſtas fronte manebat.
Indignata tamen ſuperis, irataque morti
Ibat et exiguo defigens lumina flexu.

With Petrarch I may cloſe this curſory review of the neglected authors who wrote Heroic poems in Latin, during the courſe of the dark ages.—A peculiar circumſtance induces me to add another name to the preceding liſt. John, Abbot of Peterborough, in the reign of Edward the Third, wrote an Heroic poem, entitled Bellum Navarrenſe, 1366, de Petro rege Aragoniæ, & Edwardo Principe. This performance, containing five hundred and ſixty verſes, is ſaid to be preſerved in MS. in the Bodleian Library; and I have thought it worthy of notice, becauſe it treats of the very ſubject on which Dryden informs us he had once projected an Epic poem.

Of the many Latin compoſitions of the Epic kind, which later times have produced, the Chriſtiad of Vida, the Sarcotis of Maſſenius, and the Conſtantine of Mambrun, appear to me the moſt worthy of regard; but even theſe are ſeldom peruſed: and indeed the Poet, who in a poliſhed age prefers the uſe of a dead language to that of a living one, can only expect, and perhaps only deſerves, the attention of a few curious ſequeſtered ſtudents.

NOTE

NOTE IV. VERSE 81.

Thy daring Dante his wild Viſion ſung.] Dante Allighieri was born at Florence, in May 1265, of an ancient and honourable family. Boccacio, who lived in the ſame period, has left a very curious and entertaining Treatiſe, on the Life, the Studies, and Manners of this extraordinary Poet; whom he regarded as his maſter, and for whoſe memory he profeſſed the higheſt veneration. This intereſting biographer relates, that Dante, before he was nine years old, conceived a paſſion for the lady whom he has immortalized in his ſingular Poem. Her age was near his own; and her name was Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, a noble citizen of Florence. Of this fair one the beſt accounts are obſcure. Some refining commentators have even denied her corporeal exiſtence; affirming her to be nothing more or leſs than Theology. But we may queſtion if Theology was ever the miſtreſs of ſo young a lover. The paſſion of Dante, however, like that of his ſucceſſor Petrarch, ſeems to have been of the chaſte and Platonic kind, according to the account he has himſelf given of it, in one of his early productions, entitled Vita Nuova; a mixture of myſterious poetry and proſe, in which he mentions both the origin of his affection and the death of his miſtreſs, who, according to Boccacio, died at the age of twenty-four. The ſame author aſſerts, that Dante fell into a deep melancholy in conſequence of this event, from which his friends endeavoured to raiſe him, by perſuading him to marriage. After ſome time he followed their advice, and repented it; for he unfortunately made choice of a lady who bore ſome reſemblance to the celebrated Xantippe. The Poet, not poſſeſſing the patience of Socrates, ſeparated himſelf from her with ſuch vehement expreſſions of diſlike, that he never afterwards admitted her to his preſence, though ſhe had borne him ſeveral children.—In the early part of his life he gained ſome credit in a military character; diſtinguiſhing himſelf by his bravery in an action where the Florentines obtained a ſignal victory over the citizens of Arezzo. He became ſtill more eminent by the acquiſition of civil honours; and at the age of thirty-five he roſe to be one of the chief magiſtrates of Florence, when that dignity was conferred by the ſuffrages of the people. From this exaltation

altation the Poet himſelf dated his principal misfortunes, as appears from the fragment of a letter quoted by Lionardo Bruni, one of his early biographers, where Dante ſpeaks of his political failure with that liberal frankneſs which integrity inſpires.—Italy was at that time diſtracted by the contending factions of the Ghibellins and the Guelphs: the latter, among whom Dante took an active part, were again divided into the Blacks and the Whites. Dante, ſays Gravina, exerted all his influence to unite theſe inferior parties; but his efforts were ineffectual, and he had the misfortune to be unjuſtly perſecuted by thoſe of his own faction. A powerful citizen of Florence, named Corſo Donati, had taken meaſures to terminate theſe inteſtine broils, by introducing Charles of Valois, brother to Philip the Fair, King of France. Dante, with great vehemence, oppoſed this diſgraceful project, and obtained the baniſhment of Donati and his partizans. The exiles applied to the Pope (Boniface the VIIIth) and by his aſſiſtance ſucceeded in their deſign. Charles of Valois entered Florence in triumph, and thoſe who had oppoſed his admiſſion were baniſhed in their turn. Dante had been diſpatched to Rome as the ambaſſador of his party, and was returning, when he received intelligence of the revolution in his native city. His enemies, availing themſelves of his abſence, had procured an iniquitous ſentence againſt him, by which he was condemned to baniſhment, and his poſſeſſions were confiſcated. His two enthuſiaſtic biographers, Boccacio and Manetti, expreſs the warmeſt indignation againſt this injuſtice of his country. Dante, on receiving the intelligence, took refuge in Siena, and afterwards in Arezzo, where many of his party were aſſembled. An attempt was made to ſurprize the city of Florence, by a ſmall army which Dante is ſuppoſed to have attended: the deſign miſcarried, and our Poet is conjectured to have wandered to various parts of Italy, till he found a patron in the great Can della Scala, Prince of Verona, whom he has celebrated in his Poem. The high ſpirit of Dante was ill ſuited to courtly dependence; and he is ſaid to have loſt the favour of his Veroneze patron by the rough frankneſs of his behaviour. From Verona he retired to France, according to Manetti; and Boccacio affirms that he diſputed in the Theological Schools of Paris with great reputation. Bayle queſtions his viſiting Paris at this period of his life, and thinks it improbable, that a man, who had been one of

the chief magiſtrates of Florence, ſhould condeſcend to engage in the public ſquabbles of the Pariſian Theologiſts; but the ſpirit both of Dante, and the times in which he lived, ſufficiently account for this exerciſe of his talents; and his reſidence in France at this ſeaſon is confirmed by Boccacio, in his life of our Poet, which Bayle ſeems to have had no opportunity of conſulting.

The election of Henry Count of Luxemburgh to the empire, in November 1308, afforded Dante a proſpect of being reſtored to his native city, as he attached himſelf to the intereſt of the new Emperor, in whoſe ſervice he is ſuppoſed to have written his Latin treatiſe De Monarchia, in which he aſſerted the rights of the Empire againſt the encroachments of the Papacy. In the year 1311, he inſtigated Henry to lay ſiege to Florence; in which enterprize, ſays one of his Biographers, he did not appear in perſon, from motives of reſpect towards his native city. The Emperor was repulſed by the Florentines; and his death, which happened in the ſucceeding year, deprived Dante of all hopes concerning his re-eſtabliſhment in Florence.

After this diſappointment, he is ſuppoſed to have paſſed ſome years in roving about Italy in a ſtate of poverty and diſtreſs, till he found an honourable eſtabliſhment at Ravenna, under the protection of Guido Novello da Polenta, the lord of that city, who received this illuſtrious exile with the moſt endearing liberality, continued to protect him through the few remaining years of his life, and extended his munificence to the aſhes of the Poet.

Eloquence was one of the many talents which Dante poſſeſſed in an eminent degree. On this account he is ſaid to have been employed on fourteen different embaſſies in the courſe of his life, and to have ſucceeded in moſt of them. His patron Guido had occaſion to try his abilities in a ſervice of this nature, and diſpatched him as his ambaſſador to negociate a peace with the Venetians, who were preparing for hoſtilities againſt Ravenna. Manetti aſſerts that he was unable to procure a public audience at Venice, and returned to Ravenna by land, from his apprehenſions of the Venetian fleet; when the fatigue of his journey, and the mortification of failing in his attempt to preſerve his generous patron from the impending danger, threw him into a fever, which terminated in death on the 14th of September 1321. He died, however,

in

in the palace of his friend, and the affectionate Guido paid the moſt tender regard to his memory. This magnificent patron, ſays Boccacio, commanded the body to be adorned with poetical ornaments, and, after being carried on a bier through the ſtreets of Ravenna by the moſt illuſtrious citizens, to be depoſited in a marble coffin. He pronounced himſelf the funeral oration, and expreſſed his deſign of erecting a ſplendid monument in honour of the deceaſed: a deſign which his ſubſequent misfortunes rendered him unable to accompliſh. At his requeſt, many epitaphs were written on the Poet: the beſt of them, ſays Boccacio, by Giovanni del Virgilio of Bologna, a famous author of that time, and the intimate friend of Dante. Boccacio then cites a few Latin verſes, not worth tranſcribing, ſix of which are quoted by Bayle as the compoſition of Dante himſelf, on the authority of Paul Jovius. In 1483 Bernardo Bembo, the father of the celebrated Cardinal, raiſed a handſome monument over the neglected aſhes of the Poet, with the following inſcription:

Exigua tumuli Danthes hic ſorte jacebas
Squallenti nulli cognita pæne ſitu;
At nunc marmoreo ſubnixus conderis arcu,
Omnibus et cultu ſplendidiore nites:
Nimirum Bembus, Muſis incenſus Etruſcis,
Hoc tibi, quem in primis hæ coluere, dedit.

Before this period the Florentines had vainly endeavoured to obtain the bones of their great Poet from the city of Ravenna. In the age of Leo the Xth they made a ſecond attempt, by a ſolemn application to the Pope, for that purpoſe; and the great Michael Angelo, an enthuſiaſtic admirer of Dante, very liberally offered to execute a magnificent monument to the Poet. The hopes of the Florentines were again unſucceſsful. The particulars of their ſingular petition may be found in the notes to Condivi's Life of Michael Angelo.

The perſon and manners of Dante are thus repreſented by the deſcriptive pen of Boccacio: — "Fu adunque queſto noſtro Poeta di Mezzana ſtatura; e poichè alla matura età fu pervenuto, andò alquanto gravetto, ed era il ſuo andar grave, e manſueto, di oneſtiſſimi panni ſempre veſtito,

in quello abito, che era alla ſua matura età convenevole; il ſuo volto fu lungo, il naſo aquilino, gli occhi anzi groſſi, che piccioli, le maſcelle grandi, e dal labbro di ſotto, era quel di ſopra avanzato; il colore era bruno, i capelli, e la barba ſpeſſi neri e creſpi, e ſempre nella faccia malinconico e penſoſo——Ne coſtumi publici e domeſtici mirabilmente fu compoſto e ordinato; più che niuno altro corteſe e civile; nel cibo e nel

---

A GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

Guido, vorrei, che tu, e Lappo, ed io,
Foſſimo preſi per incantamento,
E meſſi ad un vaſſel, ch'ad ogni vento
Per mare andaſſe a voler voſtro e mio;
Sicché fortuna, od altro tempo rio,
Non ci poteſſe dare impedimento:
Anzi vivendo ſempre in noi talento
Di ſtare inſieme creſceſſe 'l diſio.
E monna Vanna, e monna Bice poi,
Con quella ſu il numer delle trenta,
Con noi poneſſe il buono incantatore:
E quivi ragionar ſempre d' amore:
E ciaſcuna di lor foſſe contenta,
Siccome io credo che ſariamo noi.

Theſe lively verſes were evidently written before the Poet loſt the object of his earlieſt attachment, as ſhe is mentioned by the name of Bice. At what time, and in what place, he executed the great and ſingular work which has rendered him immortal, his numerous Commentators ſeem unable to determine. Boccacio aſſerts, that he began it in his thirty-fifth year, and had finiſhed ſeven Cantos of his Inferno before his exile; that in the plunder of his houſe, on that event, the begin-

e nel poto fu modeſtiſſimo.——Though Dante is deſcribed as much inclined to melancholy, and his genius particularly delighted in the gloomy and ſublime, yet in his early period of life he ſeems to have poſſeſſed all the lighter graces of ſprightly compoſition, as appears from the following airy and ſportive ſonnet:

IMITATION.

Henry! I wiſh that you, and Charles, and I,
By ſome ſweet ſpell within a bark were plac'd,
A gallant bark with magic virtue grac'd,
Swift at our will with every wind to fly:
So that no changes of the ſhifting ſky,
No ſtormy terrors of the watery waſte,
Might bar our courſe, but heighten ſtill our taſte
Of ſprightly joy, and of our ſocial tie:
Then, that my Lucy, Lucy fair and free,
With thoſe ſoft nymphs on whom your ſouls are bent,
The kind magician might to us convey,
To talk of love throughout the live-long day;
And that each fair might be as well content
As I in truth believe our hearts would be.

---

ning of his poem was fortunately preſerved, but remained for ſome time neglected, till its merit being accidentally diſcovered by an intelligent Poet named Dino, it was ſent to the Marquis Maroello Maleſpina, an Italian nobleman, by whom Dante was then protected. The Marquis reſtored theſe loſt papers to the Poet, and intreated him to proceed in a work which opened in ſo promiſing a manner. To this incident we are probably indebted for the poem of Dante, which he muſt have continued

under all the diſadvantages of an unfortunate and agitated life. It does not appear at what time he completed it; perhaps before he quitted Verona, as he dedicated the Paradiſe to his Veroneſe patron.——The Critics have variouſly accounted for his having called his poem Comedia. He gave it that title, ſaid one of his ſons, becauſe it opens with diſtreſs, and cloſes with felicity. The very high eſtimation in which this production was held by his country, appears from a ſingular inſtitution. The republic of Florence, in the year 1373, aſſigned a public ſtipend to a perſon appointed to read lectures on the poem of Dante: Boccacio was the firſt perſon engaged in this office; but his death happening in two years after his appointment, his Comment extended only to the ſeventeen firſt Cantos of the Inferno. The critical diſſertations that have been written on Dante are almoſt as numerous as thoſe to which Homer has given birth: the Italian, like the Grecian Bard, has been the ſubject of the higheſt panegyric, and of the groſſeſt invective. Voltaire has ſpoken of him with that precipitate vivacity, which ſo frequently led that lively Frenchman to inſult the reputation of the nobleſt writers. In one of his entertaining letters, he ſays to an Italian Abbé, "Je fais grand cas du courage, avec lequel vous avez oſé dire que Dante etoit un fou, et ſon ouvrage un monſtre — — — Le Dante pourra entrer dans les bibliotheques des curieux, mais il ne ſera jamais lu." But more temperate and candid Critics have not been wanting to diſplay the merits of this original Poet. Mr. Warton has introduced into his laſt volume on Engliſh Poetry, a judicious and ſpirited ſummary of Dante's performance. We have ſeveral verſions of the celebrated ſtory of Ugolino; but I believe no entire Canto of Dante has hitherto appeared in our language, though his whole work has been tranſlated into French, Spaniſh, and Latin verſe. The three Cantos which follow, were tranſlated a few years ago, to oblige a particular friend. The Author has ſince been ſolicited to execute an entire tranſlation of Dante; but the extreme inequality of this Poet would render ſuch a work a very laborious undertaking, and it appears very doubtful how far ſuch a verſion would intereſt our country. Perhaps the reception of theſe Cantos may diſcover to the Tranſlator the ſentiments of the public. At all events, he flatters himſelf that the enſuing portion of a celebrated poem may afford ſome pleaſure from its novelty, as he has endeavoured to give the Engliſh reader an idea of

Dante's

Dante's peculiar manner, by adopting his triple rhyme; and he does not recollect that this mode of verſification has ever appeared before in our language; it has obliged him of courſe to make the number of tranſlated lines correſpond exactly with thoſe of the original. The difficulties attending this metre will ſufficiently ſhew themſelves, and obtain ſome degree of indulgence from the intelligent and candid reader.

DELL' INFERNO.

CANTO I.

NEL mezzo del cammin di noſtra vita
Mi ritrovai per una ſelva oſcura,
Che la diritta via era ſmarrita:
E quanto à dir qual era, è coſa dura,
Queſta ſelva ſelvaggia ed aſpra e forte,
Che nel penſier rinnuova la paura.
Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte:
Ma per trattar del ben, ch'i vi trovai,
Dirò dell' altre coſe, ch'i v'ho ſcorte.
I non ſo ben ridir, com'i v'entrai;
Tant'era pien di ſonno in ſu quel punto,
Che la verace via abbandonai.
Ma po' ch'i fui al piè d'un colle giunto,
Là ove terminava quella valle,
Che m'avea di paura il cor compunto;
Guarda'in alto, e vidi le ſue ſpalle
Veſtite già de' raggi del pianeta,
Che mena dritto altrui per ogni calle.
Allor fu la paura un poco queta,
Che nel lago del cor m'era durata,
La notte, ch'i paſſai con tanta pieta.
E come quei, che con lena affannata
Uſcito fuor del pelago alla riva,
Si volge all'aqua perigliosa, e guata;
Coſi l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,
Si vols' à retro à rimirar lo paſſo,
Che non laſciò giammai perſona viva.

Poi

THE INFERNO OF DANTE.

CANTO I.

IN the mid ſeaſon of this mortal ſtrife,
I found myſelf within a gloomy grove,
Far wandering from the ways of perfect life:
The place I know not, where I chanc'd to rove,
It was a wood ſo wild, it wounds me ſore
But to remember with what ills I ſtrove:
Such ſtill my dread, that death is little more.
But I will tell the good which there I found.
High things 'twas there my fortune to explore:
Yet how I enter'd on that ſecret ground
I know not to explain; ſo much in ſleep
My mortal ſenſes at that hour were drown'd.
But when I reach'd the bottom of a ſteep,
That roſe to terminate the dreary vale,
Which made cold terrors thro' my boſom creep,
I look'd on high, where breath'd a purer gale,
And ſaw the ſummit gliſten with that ray
Which leads the wand'rer ſafe o'er hill and dale.
This ſoon began to chaſe thoſe fears away,
Which held my ſtruggling ſpirit bound ſo faſt
During that night of darkneſs and diſmay:
And, as th' exhauſted wretch, by fortune caſt
Safe from the ſtormy deep upon the ſhore,
Turns to ſurvey the perils he has paſt,
So turn'd my ſoul, ere yet its dread was o'er,
Back to contemplate that myſterious ſtrait
Where living mortal never paſt before.

Ariſing

Poi ch'ebbi ripoſato il corpo laſſo,
Ripreſi via per la piaggia deſerta,
Si che 'l piè fermo ſempre era 'l più baſſo.
Ed ecco, quaſi al cominciar dell' erta,
Una lonza leggiera e preſta molto,
Che di pel maculato era coperta.
E non mi ſi partia dinanzi al volto;
Anz' impediva tanto 'l mio cammino,
Ch'i fu per ritornar piu volte volto.
Temp' era dal principio del mattino,
E 'l ſol montava in ſu con quelle ſtelle,
Ch' eran con lui, quando l'amor divino
Moſſe da prima quelle coſe belle
Si ch'a bene ſperar m'era cagione
Di quella fera la gaietta pelle,
L'ora del tempo, e la dolce ſtagione:
Ma non ſi, che paura non mi deſſe
La viſta, che m'apparve d'un leone.
Queſti parea, che contra me veneſſe
Con la teſt'alta, e con rabbioſa fame,
Si che parea, che l'aer ne temeſſe:
Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
Sembiava carca con la ſua magrezza,
E molte genti fe' già viver grame.
Queſta mi porſe tanto di gravezza
Con la paura, ch'uſcia di ſua viſta,
Ch'i perde' la ſperanza dell' altezza.
E quale è quei, che volentieri acquiſta,
E gingne 'l tempo, che perder lo face,
Che 'n tutt' i ſuoi penſier piange, e s'attriſta;
Tal me fece la beſtia ſenza pace,
Che venendomi 'ncontro, a poco a poco
Mi ripingeva là, dove 'l ſol tace.
Mentre ch'i rovinava in baſſo loco,
Dinanzi gli occhi mi ſi fu offerto
Chi per lungo ſilenzio parea fioco.

Ariſing ſoon from this repoſe elate,
Up the rough ſteep my journey I begin,
My lower foot ſuſtaining all my weight.
Here, while my toilſome way I ſlowly win,
Behold a nimble Panther ſprings to ſight!
And beauteous ſpots adorn his motley ſkin:
He at my preſence ſhew'd no ſigns of fright,
But rather ſtrove to bar my doubtful way;
I often turn'd, and oft reſolv'd on flight.
'Twas now the chearful hour of riſing day;
The ſun advanc'd in that propitious ſign
Which firſt beheld his radiant beams diſplay
Creation's charms, the work of love divine!
So that I now was rais'd to hope ſublime,
By theſe bright omens of a fate benign,
The beauteous Beaſt and the ſweet hour of prime.
But ſoon I loſt that hope; and ſhook yet more
To ſee a Lion in this lonely clime:
With open jaws, athirſt for human gore,
He ruſh'd towards me in his hungry ire;
Air ſeem'd to tremble at his ſavage roar.
With him, enflam'd with every fierce deſire,
A famiſh'd She-wolf, like a ſpectre, came;
Beneath whoſe gripe ſhall many a wretch expire.
Such ſad oppreſſion ſeiz'd my ſinking frame,
Such horror at theſe ſtrange tremendous ſights,
My hopes to climb the hill no longer aim;
But, as the wretch whom lucre's luſt incites,
In the curſt hour which ſcatters all his wealth,
Sinks in deep ſorrow, dead to all delights,
So was I robb'd of all my ſpirit's health,
And to the quarter where the ſun grows mute,
Driven by this Beaſt, who crept on me by ſtealth.
While I retreated from her dread purſuit,
A manly figure my glad eyes ſurvey'd,
Whoſe voice was like the whiſper of a lute.

Quando i' vidi coſtui nel gran diſerto;
Miſerere di me gridai a lui,
Qual che tu ſii, od ombra, od uomo certo.
Riſpoſemi: non uomo, uomo già fui,
E li parenti miei furon Lombardi,
E Mantovani, per patria amendui.
Nacqui ſub Julio, ancorche foſſe tardi,
E viſſi a Roma, ſotto 'l buono Aguſto,
Al tempo degli Dei falſi e bugiardi.
Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giuſto
Figlioul d'Anchiſe, che venne da Troja,
Poichè 'l ſuperbo Ilion fu combuſto.
Ma tu, perchè ritorni à tanta noja?
Perchè non ſali il dilettoſo monte,
Ch'è principio e cagion di tutta gioja?
Or ſe' tu quel Virgilio, e quella fonte,
Che ſpande di parlar sì largo fiume?
Riſpoſi lui, con vergognoſa fronte.
Oh degli altri poeti onore e lume,
Vagliami 'l lungo ſtudio, e'l grande amore,
Che m'han fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
Tu ſe' lo mio maeſtro, e'l mio autore:
Tu ſe' ſolo colui, da cu'io tolſi
Lo bello ſtile, che m'ha fatto onore.
Vedi la beſtia, per cu'io mi volſi:
Ajutami da lei, famoſo ſaggio,
Ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polſi.
A te convien tenere altro viaggio,
Riſpoſe, poichè lagrimar mi vide,
Se vuoi campar d'eſto luogo ſelvaggio:
Che queſta beſtia, per la qual tu gride,
Non laſcia altrui paſſar per la ſua via,
Ma tanto lo 'mpediſce, che l'uccide:
Ed ha natura sì malvagia e ria,
Che mai non empie la bramoſa voglia,
E, dopo 'l paſto, ha più fame, che pria.

Molti

Soon as I ſaw him in this dreary glade,
Take pity on me, to this form I cry'd,
Be thou ſubſtantial man, or fleeting ſhade!—
A man I was (the gracious form reply'd)
And both my parents were of Lombard race;
They in their native Mantua liv'd and dy'd:
I liv'd at Rome, rich in a monarch's grace,
Beneath the good Auguſtus' letter'd reign,
While fabled Gods were ſerv'd with worſhip baſe.
A Bard I was: the ſubject of my ſtrain
That juſt and pious Chief who ſail'd from Troy,
Sinking in aſhes on the ſanguine plain.
But thou, whom theſe portentous ſights annoy,
Why doſt thou turn? why not aſcend the mount,
Source of all good, and ſummit of all joy!—
Art thou that Virgil? thou! that copious fount
Of richeſt eloquence, ſo clear, ſo bright?
I anſwer'd, bluſhing at his kind account;
O thou! of Poets the pure guide and light!
Now let me profit by that fond eſteem
Which kept thy ſong for ever in my ſight!
Thou art my Maſter! thou my Bard ſupreme,
From whom alone my fond ambition drew
That purer ſtyle which I my glory deem!
O! from this Beaſt, ſo hideous to the view,
Save me! O ſave me! thou much-honour'd Sage!
For growing terrors all my power ſubdue.—
A different road muſt lead thee from her rage,
(He ſaid, obſervant of my ſtarting tears)
And from this wild thy ſpirit diſengage;
For that terrific Beaſt, which caus'd thy fears,
Worries each wretch that in her road ſhe ſpies,
Till death at length, his ſole relief, appears.
So keen her nature, ſleep ne'er ſeals her eyes;
Her ravenous hunger no repaſt can ſate;
Food only ſerves to make its fury riſe.

Molti ſon gli animali, a cui s'ammoglia;
E più ſaranno ancora, infin che 'l veltro
Verrà, che la farà morir di doglia.
Queſti non ciberà terra, nè peltro,
Ma ſapienza, e amore, e virtute,
E ſua nazion ſarà tra Feltro e Feltro:
Di quell' umile Italia fia ſalute,
Per cui morío la Vergine Cammilla,
Eurialo, e Turno, e Niſo di ferute:
Queſti la caccerà per ogni villa,
Fin chè l'avrà rimeſſa nello 'nferno,
La onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.
Ond' io, per lo tuo me', penſo e diſcerno,
Che tu mi ſegui, ed io ſarò tua guida,
E trarrotti di qui, per luogo eterno,
Ov' udirai le diſperate ſtrida,
Vedrai gli antiche ſpiriti dolenti,
Che la ſeconda morte ciaſcun grida:
E poi vedrai color, che ſon contenti
Nel fuoco; perchè ſperan di venire,
Quando che ſia, alle beate genti:
Alle qua' poi ſe tu vorrai ſalire,
Anima fia, a ciò di me più degna:
Con lei ti laſcerò nel mio partire:
Che quello 'mperador, che laſsù regna,
Perch' i' fu' ribellante alla ſua legge,
Non vuol che'n ſua città per me ſi vegna.
In tutte parti impera, e quivi regge:
Quivi è la ſua cittade, e l'alto ſeggio:
O felice colui, cu' ivi elegge!
Ed io a lui: Poeta, i' ti rechieggio,
Per quello Iddio, che tu non conoſceſti,
Acciocch' i' fugga queſto male e peggio,
Che tu mi meni, là dov'or diceſti,
Sì ch' i' vegga la porta di ſan Pietro,
E color che tu fai cotanto meſti.
Allor ſi moſſe, ed io li tenni dietro.

She calls from different animals her mate;
And long ſhall ſhe produce an offspring baſe,
Then from a mighty victor meet her fate.
Nor pomp nor riches ſhall that victor grace,
But truth, and love, and all excelling worth;
He from his reſcu'd land all ill ſhall chaſe,
The ſaviour of the realm that gives him birth,
Of Italy, for whom Camilla fell,
And Turnus, fighting for his native earth,
And Ninus, with the friend he lov'd ſo well.
The Beaſt this victor to that den ſhall drive
Whence Envy let her looſe, her native hell!
Now for thy good, well-pleas'd, I will contrive,
That by my aid, while I thy ſteps controul,
Thou ſhalt in ſafety at thoſe realms arrive
Where thou ſhalt ſee the tortur'd ſpirits roll,
And hear each mourn his miſerable fate,
Calling for death on his immortal ſoul.
Then ſhalt thou viſit thoſe, who in a ſtate
Of purifying fire are ſtill content,
And for their promis'd heaven ſubmiſſive wait:
If to that heaven thy happy courſe is bent,
A worthier guard will ſoon my place ſupply;
A purer ſpirit, for thy guidance ſent!
For that Immortal Power, who rules on high,
Becauſe I ne'er his perfect laws have known,
His ſacred preſence will to me deny.
There in the realms of light he fix'd his throne;
There o'er the world Almighty Lord he reigns:
O bleſt the ſervant whom he deigns to own!—
Poet (I anſwer'd) by thy living ſtrains,
And by that God, tho' not reveal'd to thee,
That I may 'ſcape from theſe, and heavier pains,
Be thou my leader, where thy way is free!
So that my eyes St. Peter's gate may find,
And all the wonders of the deep may ſee!
He led, and I attentive march'd behind.

CANTO II.

LO giorno ſe n'andava, e l'aer bruno
Toglieva gli animai, che ſono 'n terra,
Dalle fatiche loro: ed io ſol' uno
M'apparecchiava a ſoſtener la guerra,
Si del cammino, e sì della pietate,
Che ritrarrà la mente, che non erra.
O Muſe, o alto 'ngegno, or m'ajutate:
O mente, che ſcriveſti ciò ch'i' vidi,
Qui ſi parrà la tua nobilitate.
Io cominciai: Poeta, che mi guidi,
Guarda la mia virtù, s'ell' è poſſente,
Prima ch' all' alto paſſo tu mi fidi.
Tu dici, che di Silvio lo parente,
Corrutibile ancora, ad immortale
Secolo andò, e fu ſenſibilmente.
Però ſe l'avverſario d'ogni male
Corteſe fu, penſando l'alto effetto,
Ch' uſcir dovea di lui, e 'l chi, e 'l quale,
Non pare indegno ad uomo d'intelletto:
Ch' ei fu dell'alma Roma, e di ſuo 'mpero,
Nell' empireo ciel, per padre, eletto:
La quale, e'l quale (a voler dir lo vero)
Fur ſtabiliti, per lo loco ſanto,
U' ſiede il ſucceſſor del maggior Piero.
Per queſta andata, onde li dai tu vanto,
Inteſe coſe, che furon cagione
Di ſua vittoria, e del papale ammanto.
Andovvi poi lo vas d'elezione,
Per recarne conforto, a quella fede,
Ch' è principio alla via di ſalvazione.

CANTO II.

THE day was ſinking, and the duſky air
On all the animals of earth beſtow'd
Reſt from their labours. I alone prepare
To meet new toil, both from my dreary road,
And pious wiſh to paint in worthy phraſe
The Unerring Mind, and his divine abode.
O ſacred Muſes! now my genius raiſe!
O Memory, who writeſt what I ſaw,
From hence ſhall ſpring thy ever-during praiſe!
Kind Poet (I began, with trembling awe)
Mark if my ſoul be equal to this aim!
Nor into ſcenes too hard my weakneſs draw!
Thy Song declares, the Chief of pious fame
Appear'd among the bleſt, retaining ſtill
His mortal ſenſes and material frame;
Yet, if the great Oppoſer of all ill
Shew'd grace to him, as knowing what and who
Should from him riſe, and mighty things fulfil,
Moſt worthy he appear'd, in Reaſon's view,
That Heaven ſhould chuſe him as the Roman Sire,
Source of that empire which ſo widely grew,
Mark'd in its growth by the angelic choir
To be the ſeat where Sanctity ſhould reſt,
And Peter's heirs yet raiſe dominion higher.
From his dark journey, in thy Song expreſt,
He learn'd myſterious things; from whence aroſe
Rome's early grandeur and the Papal veſt.
To Paul, while living, heaven's high powers diſcloſe
Their ſecret bliſs, that he may thence receive
Strength in that faith from which ſalvation flows.

Ma io, perchè venirvi? o chi 'l concede?
Io non Enea, io non Paolo ſono:
Me degno à ciò, nè io, nè altri il crede.
Perchè ſe del venire i' m'abbandono,
Temo che la venuta non ſia folle:
Se' ſavio, e 'ntendi me', ch'i' non ragiono.
E quale è quei, che diſvuol ciò ch'e' volle,
E per nuovi penſier cangia propoſta,
Si che del cominciar tutto ſi tolle;
Tal mi fec' io' in quella oſcura coſta:
Perchè, penſando, conſumai la 'mpreſa,
Che fu, nel cominciar, cotanto toſta.
Se io ho ben la tua parola inteſa,
Riſpoſe del magnanimo quell' ombra,
L'anima tua è da viltate offeſa:
La qual molte fiate l'uomo ingombra,
Si che d'onrata impreſa lo rivolve,
Come falſo veder beſtia, quand' ombra.
Da queſta tema acciocché tu ti ſolve,
Dirotti, perch' i' venni, e quel, ch'io'nteſi,
Nel primo punto, che di te mi dolve.
Io era tra color, che ſon ſoſpeſi,
E donna mi chiamò beata e bella,
Tal che di comandare i' la richieſi.
Lucevan gli occhi ſuoi più, che la ſtella:
E cominciommi a dir ſoave e piana,
Con angelica voce, in ſua favella:
O anima corteſe Mantovana,
Di cui la fama ancor nel mondo dura,
E durerà, quanto 'l moto lontana:
L'amico mio, e non della ventura,
Nella deſerta piaggia è impedito
Sì nel cammin, che volto è per paura:
E temo, che non ſia già sì ſmarrito,
Ch'io mi ſia tardi al ſoccorſo levata,
Per quel, ch' io ho di lui, nel Cielo, udito.

But how may I this high exploit atchieve?
I'm not Æneas, nor the holy Paul:
Of this unworthy I myſelf believe:
If then I follow at thy friendly call,
Midway perchance my trembling ſoul may ſink:
Wiſe as thou art, thou may'ſt foreſee my fall.
Now as a man who, ſhudd'ring on the brink
Of ſome great venture, ſudden ſhifts his mind,
And feels his ſpirit from the peril ſhrink;
So, in this ſcene of doubt and darkneſs join'd,
Wavering I waſted thought in wild affright,
And the firſt ardour of my ſoul reſign'd.
If thy faint words I underſtand aright,
(Reply'd the mighty and magnanimous ſhade)
Thoſe miſts of fear have dimm'd thy mental ſight,
Which oft the ſeat of human ſenſe invade,
And make blind mortals from high deeds recoil,
By Terror's airy phantaſies betray'd:
But, that ſuch fears thy ſoul no more may ſoil,
I'll tell thee whence I came; at whoſe requeſt;
When firſt I pitied thy uncertain toil.
From the ſuſpended hoſt in which I reſt,
A lovely Spirit call'd me, fair as light;
Eager I waited on her high beheſt;
While eyes beyond the ſolar radiance bright,
And with the ſweetneſs of an angel's tongue,
Thus her ſoft words my willing aid invite:
O ever gentle ſhade, from Mantua ſprung!
Whoſe fame unfading on the earth ſhall laſt
As long as earth in ambient air is hung;
My friend, whoſe love all baſe deſire ſurpaſt,
In yon drear deſart finds his paſſage barr'd,
And compaſs'd round with terrors ſtands aghaſt;
And much I fear, beſet with dangers hard,
He may be loſt beyond all friendly reach,
And I from heaven deſcend too late a guard.

Or muovi, e con la tua parola ornata,
E con ciò, che ha meſtieri al ſuo campare,
L'ajuta sì, ch'i' ne ſia conſolata.
I' ſon Beatrice, che ti faccio andare:
Vegno di loco, ove tornar diſio:
Amor mi moſſe, che mi fa parlare.
Quando ſarò dinanzi al ſignor mio,
Di te mi loderò ſovente a lui:
Tacette allora, e poi comincia' io:
O donna di virtù, ſola, per cui,
L'umana ſpezie eccede ogni contento
Da quel ciel, ch' ha minor li cerchi ſuoi:
Tanto m'aggrada 'l tuo comandamento,
Che l'ubbidir, ſe già foſſe, m'è tardi:
Più non t'è uopo aprirmi 'l tuo talento.
Ma dimmi la cagion, che non ti guardi
Dello ſcender quaggiuſo, in queſto centro,
Dall' ampio loco, ove tornar tu ardi.
Da che tu vuoi ſaper cotanto addentro,
Dirotti brevemente, mi riſpoſe,
Perch'i' non temo di venir qua entro.
Temer ſi dee di ſole quelle coſe,
Ch' hanno potenza di fare altrui male:
Dell' altre nò, che non ſon pauroſe.
Io ſon fatta da Dio, ſua mercè, tale,
Che la voſtra miſeria non mi tange,
Nè fiamma d'eſto 'ncendio non m'aſſale.
Donna è gentil nel ciel, che ſi compiange
Di queſto 'mpedimento, ov' i' ti mando,
Sì che duro giudicio laſſù frange.
Queſta chieſe Lucía in ſuo dimando,
E diſſe: Ora abbiſogna il tuo fedele
Di te, ed io a te lo raccomando.
Lucía nimica di ciaſcun crudele
Si moſſe, e venne al loco, dov'i' era,
Che mi ſedea con l'antica Rachele:

Diſſe,

But go! and with thy ſoft ſoul-ſoothing ſpeech,
And all the aid thy wiſdom may inſpire,
The ways of ſafety to this wanderer teach!
My name is Beatrice: the heavenly quire
For this I left, tho' ever left with pain;
But love ſuggeſted what I now deſire.
When I the preſence of my lord regain,
On thee my praiſes with delight ſhall dwell.
So ſpake this angel, in her heavenly ſtrain.
Bright Fair, (I cry'd) who didſt on earth excel
All that e'er ſhone beneath the lunar ſphere,
And every mind to virtuous love impel!
Had I e'en now perform'd the taſk I hear,
That ſwift performance I ſhould think too ſlow:
Nor needs there more; your gracious will is clear:
Yet how you venture, I would gladly know,
From thoſe pure realms, to which again you fly,
So near the center of eternal woe.
What you require (ſhe ſaid, in kind reply)
I briefly will explain: how thus I dare,
Unconſcious of alarm, theſe depths to try.
From theſe things only ſprings our fearful care,
By which our hapleſs friends may ſuffer ill;
But not from other; for no fear is there.
Such am I form'd, by Heaven's moſt gracious will,
That torture cannot touch my purer frame,
E'en where fierce fires his flaming region fill.
A gentle ſpirit (Lucia is her name)
In heaven laments the hardſhips of my friend,
For whom I aſk your aid: to me ſhe came,
And kindly bade me to his woes attend:
Behold (ſhe ſaid) thy ſervant in diſtreſs!
And I his ſafety to thy care commend.
Lucia, the friend of all whom ills oppreſs,
Me, where I ſate with penſive Rachel, ſought,
In heavenly contemplation's deep receſs:

Diſſe, Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
Che non ſoccorri quei, che t'amò tanto;
Ch' uſcío per te della volgare ſchiera?
Non odi tu la pieta del ſuo pianto,
Non vedi tu la morte, che 'l combatte
Su la fiumana, ove 'l mar non ha vanto?
Al mondo non fur mai perſone ratte
A far lor pro, ed a fuggir lor danno,
Com' io, dopo cotai parole fatte,
Venni quaggiù dal mio beato ſcanno,
Fidandomi nel tuo parlare oneſto,
Ch' onora te, e quei, ch'udito l'hanno.
Poſcia che m'ebbe ragionato queſto,
Gli occhi lucenti, lagrimando, volſe:
Perchè mi fece del venir più preſto:
E venni à te così, com' ella volſe:
Dinanzi a quella fiera ti levai,
Che del bel monte il corto andar ti tolſe.
Dunque che è? perchè, perchè riſtai?
Perchè tanta viltà nel cuore allette?
Perchè ardire e franchezza non hai?
Poſcia che tai tre donne benedette
Curan di te, nella corte del Cielo,
E'l mio parlar tanto ben t'impromette?
Quale i fioretti, dal notturno gielo,
Chinati e chiuſi, poi che'l ſol gl'imbianca,
Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro ſtelo,
Tal mi fec' io, di mia virtute ſtanca:
E tanto buono ardire al cuor mi corſe,
Ch'i' cominciai, come perſona franca:
O pietoſa colei, che mi ſoccorſe,
E tu corteſe, ch'ubbidiſti toſto
Alle vere parole, che ti porſe!
Tu m'hai con deſiderio il cuor diſpoſto
Sì al venir, con le parole tue,
Ch'i' ſon tornato nel primo propoſto.

Or

In mercy's name (ſhe cry'd) thus loſt in thought,
Seeſt thou not him who held thy charms ſo dear,
Whom Love to riſe above the vulgar taught?
And doſt thou not his lamentation hear,
Nor ſee the horror, which his ſtrength impairs,
On yon wide torrent, with no haven near?
Never was mind, intent on worldly cares,
So eager wealth to gain, or loſs to ſhun,
As, when acquainted with theſe deadly ſnares,
I flew from the bleſt confines of the ſun,
Truſting that eloquence, which to thy name
And to thy followers ſuch praiſe has won.
She having thus explain'd her gracious aim,
Turn'd her bright eyes, which tears of pity fill:
And hence more ſwift to thy relief I came;
And, pleas'd to execute her heavenly will,
I ſav'd thee from the fury of that Beaſt,
Which barr'd thy journey up the brighter hill.
Why then, O why has all thy ardour ceas'd?
And whence this faintneſs in thy feeble mind?
Why has its noble energy decreas'd,
When theſe pure Spirits, for thy good combin'd,
Watch o'er thy ſafety in their heavenly ſeat,
And I reveal the favour thou ſhalt find?—
As tender flowers, reviv'd by ſolar heat,
That thro' the chilling night have ſunk depreſt,
Riſe and unfold, the welcome ray to meet;
So roſe my ſpirit, of new life poſſeſt;
And, my warm heart on high atchievements bent,
I thus my animating guide addreſt:
Gracious that Spirit who thy ſuccour ſent!
And friendly thou, who freely haſt diſplay'd
Thy zeal to execute her kind intent!
Thy ſoothing words have to my ſoul convey'd
Such keen deſire to thoſe bright realms to ſoar,
I ſcorn the terror that my ſtep delay'd.

Now

Or va, ch'un ſol volere è d'amendue:
Tu duca, tu ſignore, e tu maeſtro:
Così li diſſi: e poichè moſſo fue,
Entrai per lo cammino alto e ſilveſtro.

CANTO III.

"PER me ſi va nella città dolente:
Per me ſi va nell' eterno dolore:
Per me ſi va tra la perduta gente.
Giuſtizia moſſe 'l mio alto fattore:
Fecemi la divina poteſtate,
La ſomma ſapienzia, e 'l primo amore.
Dinanzi a me non fur coſe create,
Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro:
Laſciate ogni ſperanza, voi che 'ntrate."
Queſte parole di colore oſcuro
Vid' io ſcritte al ſommo d'una porta:
Perch'io, Maeſtro, il ſenſo lor m'è duro.
Ed egli a me, come perſona accorta,
Qui ſi convien laſciare ogni ſoſpetto:
Ogni viltà convien, che qui ſia morta.
Noi ſem venuti al luogo, ov' i' t'ho detto,
Che tu vedrai le genti doloroſe,
Ch'hanno perduto 'l ben dello 'ntelletto.
E poichè la ſua mano alla mia poſe,
Con lieto volto, ond'i' mi confortai,
Mi miſe dentro alle ſegrete coſe.
Quivi ſoſpiri, pianti, e alti guai
Riſonavan, per l'aer ſenza ſtelle,
Perch'io al cominciar, ne lagrimai.
Diverſe lingue, orribili favelle,
Parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,
Voci alte e fioche, e ſuon di man con elle

Now lead!—thy pleaſure I diſpute no more.
My lord, my maſter thou! and thou my guard!—
I ended here; and, while he march'd before,
The gloomy road I enter'd, deep and hard.

CANTO III.

"THRO' me you paſs to Mourning's dark domain;
Thro' me to ſcenes where Grief muſt ever pine;
Thro' me, to Miſery's devoted train.
Juſtice and power in my Great Founder join,
And love and wiſdom all his fabrics rear;
Wiſdom above controul, and love divine!
Before me, Nature ſaw no works appear,
Save works eternal: ſuch was I ordain'd.
Quit every hope, all ye who enter here!"
Theſe characters, where miſty darkneſs reign'd,
High o'er a lofty gate I ſaw engrav'd.
Ah Sire! (ſaid I) hard things are here contain'd.
He, ſapient Guide! my farther queſtion ſav'd,
With ſpirit anſwering, "Here all doubt reſign,
All weak diſtruſt, and every thought deprav'd;
At length we've reach'd that gloomy drear confine,
Where, as I ſaid, thou'lt ſee the mournful race
For ever robb'd of Reaſon's light benign."
Then, ſtretching forth his hand with gentle grace,
From whence new comfort through my boſom flows,
He led me in to that myſterious place.
There ſighs, and wailings, and ſevereſt woes,
Deeply reſounded through the ſtarleſs air;
And as I firſt advanc'd, my fears aroſe.
Each different cry, the murmuring notes of care,
Accents of miſery, and words of ire,
With all the ſounds of diſcord and deſpair,

To

Facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira
Sempre 'n quell' aria, ſenza tempo, tinta,
Come la rena quando 'l turbo ſpira.
Ed io, ch' avea d'error la teſta cinta,
Diſſi, Maeſtro, che è quel, ch' i' odo?
E che gent' è, che par nel duol sì vinta?
Ed egli a me: Queſto miſero modo
Tengon l' anime triſte di coloro,
Che viſſer ſanza infamia, e ſanza lodo.
Miſchiate ſono a quel cattivo coro
Degli angeli, che non furon ribelli,
Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per ſe foro.
Cacciarli i ciel, per non eſſer men belli:
Nè lo profondo inferno gli riceve,
Ch'alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli.
Ed io: Maeſtro, che è tanto greve
A lor, che lamentar gli fa sì forte?
Riſpoſe: Dicerolti molto breve.
Queſti non hanno ſperanza di morte:
E la lor cieca vita è tanto baſſa,
Che 'nvidioſi ſon d'ognì altra ſorte.
Fama di loro il mondo eſſer non laſſa:
Miſericordia e giuſtizia gli ſdegna.
Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e paſſa.
Ed io, che riguardai, vidi una inſegna,
Che, girando, correva tanto ratta,
Che d'ogni poſa mi pareva indegna:
E dietro le venía sì lunga tratta
Di gente, ch'i' non avrei mai creduto,
Che morte tanta n' aveſſe disfatta.
Poſcia ch' io v'ebbi alcun riconoſciuto,
Guardai, e vidi l'ombra di colui,
Che fece, per viltate, il gran rifiuto.
Incontanente inteſe, e certo fui,
Che queſt' era la ſetta de' cattivi
A Dio ſpiacenti, ed a' nemici ſui.

To form ſuch tumult in this ſcene conſpire,
As flies for ever round the gloomy waſte,
Like ſand when quicken'd by the whirlwind's fire.
I then (my mind with error ſtill diſgrac'd)
Exclaim'd—O Sire! what may this trouble mean?
What forms are theſe, by ſorrow ſo debas'd?—
He ſoon reply'd—Behold, theſe bounds between,
All who without or infamy or fame
Clos'd the blank buſineſs of their mortal ſcene!
They join thoſe angels, of ignoble name,
Who not rebell'd, yet were not faithful found;
Without attachment! ſelf alone their aim!
Heaven ſhuts them out from its unſullied bound;
And Hell refuſes to admit this train,
Leſt e'en the damn'd o'er theſe their triumph ſound.—
O Sire! (ſaid I) whence then this grievous pain,
That on our ears their lamentations grate?—
This (he reply'd) I will in brief explain:
Theſe have no hope that death may mend their fate;
And their blind days form ſo confus'd a maſs,
They pine with envy of each other's ſtate:
From earth their name has periſh'd, like the graſs;
E'en Mercy views them with a ſcornful eye.
We'll ſpeak of them no more: Behold! and paſs!—
I look'd, and ſaw a banner rais'd on high,
That whirl'd, unconſcious of a moment's ſtand,
With rapid circles in the troubled ſky:
Behind it, driven by Fate's ſupreme command,
Came ſuch a hoſt! I ne'er could have believ'd
Death had collected ſo complete a band.
When now I had the forms of all perceiv'd,
I ſaw the ſhade of that ignoble prieſt,
Of ſovereign power by indolence bereav'd.
Inſtant I knew, from every doubt releas'd,
Theſe were the baſe, the miſcreated crew
To whom the hate of God had never ceas'd.

Queſti ſciaurati, che mai non fur vivi,
Erano ignudi, e ſtimolati molto
Da moſconi, e da veſpe, ch'erano ivi.
Elle rigavan lor di ſangue il volto,
Che miſchiato di lagrime, a' lor piedi,
Da faſtidioſi vermi era ricolto.
E poi, ch'a riguardare oltre mi diedi,
Vidi gente alla riva d'un gran fiume;
Perch' i' diſſi: Maeſtro, or mi concedi,
Ch'io ſappia, quali ſono, e qual coſtume
Le fa parer di trapaſſar sì pronte,
Com'io diſcerno per lo fioco lume.
Ed egli a me: Le coſe ti fien conte,
Quando noi fermerem li noſtri paſſi
Su la triſta riviera d'Acheronte.
Allor con gli occhi vergognoſi e baſſi
Temendo, no 'l mio dir gli fuſſe grave,
Infino al fiume di parlar mi traſſi.
Ed ecco verſo noi venir, per nave,
Un vecchio bianco, per antico pelo,
Gridando, Guai à voi anime prave:
Non iſperate mai veder lo cielo:
I' vegno, per menarvi all' altra riva
Nelle tenebre eterne, in caldo e'n gielo:
E tu, che ſe' coſtì, anima viva,
Partiti da coteſti, che ſon morti:
Ma poi ch' e' vide, ch' i' non mi partiva,
Diſſe: Per altre vie, per altri porti
Verrai a piaggia, non qui, per paſſare:
Più lieve legno convien, che ti porti.
E'l duca a lui: Caron, non ti crucciare:
Vuolſi così colà, dove ſi puote
Ciò che ſi vuole, e più non dimandare.
Quinci fur quete le lanoſe gote
Al nocchier della livida palude,
Che 'ntorno agli occhi ave' di fiamme ruote.

Ma

Vile forms! ne'er honor'd with exiſtence true!
Naked they march'd, and ſorely were they ſtung
By waſps and hornets, that around them flew;
Theſe the black blood from their gall'd faces wrung;
Blood mixt with tears, that, trickling to their feet,
Fed the faſtidious worms which round them clung.
When now I farther pierc'd the dark retreat,
Numbers I ſaw beſide a mighty ſtream:
Sudden I cry'd—Now, Sire, let me entreat
To know what forms in diſtant proſpect ſeem
To paſs ſo ſwiftly o'er a flood ſo wide,
As I diſcern by this imperfect gleam?—
That ſhalt thou know (return'd my gracious Guide)
When the near reſpite from our toil we reach,
On ſullen Acheron's infernal tide.—
With downcaſt eyes, that pardon now beſeech,
And hoping ſilence may that pardon win,
E'en to the river I abſtain'd from ſpeech.
And lo! towards us, with a ſhrivell'd ſkin,
A hoary boatman ſteers his crazy bark,
Exclaiming, "Woe to all ye ſons of ſin!
Hope not for heaven, nor light's celeſtial ſpark!
I come to waft you to a different lot;
To Torture's realm, with endleſs horror dark:
And thou, who living view'ſt this ſacred ſpot,
Haſte to depart from theſe, for theſe are dead!"
But when he ſaw that I departed not,
In wrath he cry'd, "Thro' other paſſes led,
Not here, ſhalt thou attempt the farther ſhore;
But in a bark to bear thy firmer tread."—
O Charon, ſaid my Guide, thy ſtrife give o'er;
For thus 'tis will'd in that ſuperior ſcene
Where will is power. Seek thou to know no more!—
Now grew the bearded viſage more ſerene
Of the ſtern boatman on the livid lake,
Whoſe eyes ſo lately glar'd with anger keen:

Ma quell' anime, ch'eran laſſe e nude,
Cangiar colore, e dibattero i denti,
Ratto che 'nteſer le parole crude.
Beſtemmiavano Iddio, e i lor parenti,
L'umana ſpezie, il luogo, il tempo, e'l ſeme,
Di lor ſemenza, e di lor naſcimenti.
Poi ſi ritraſſer tutte quante inſieme
Forte piangendo, alla riva malvagia,
Ch'attende ciaſcun'uom, che Dio non teme.
Caron dimonio, con occhi di bragia,
Loro accennando, tutte le raccoglie:
Batte col remo, qualunque s'adagia.
Come d' Autunno ſi levan le foglie,
L' una appreſſo dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo
Rende alla terra tutte le ſue ſpoglie;
Similemente il mal ſeme d' Adamo:
Gittanſi di quel lito ad una ad una,
Per cenni, com' augel, per ſuo richiamo.
Così ſen vanno ſu per l'onda bruna,
E avanti che ſien di là diſceſe,
Anche di qua nova ſchiera s'aduna.
Figliuol mio, diſſe il maeſtro corteſe,
Quelli, che muojon nell' ira di Dio,
Tutti convegnon qui d' ogni paeſe:
E pronti ſono al trapaſſar del rio,
Che la divina giuſtizia gli ſprona,
Sì che la tema ſi volge in diſio.
Quinci non paſſa mai anima buona:
E però ſe Caron di te ſi lagna,
Ben puoi ſaper omai, che'l ſuo dir ſuona.
Finito queſto la buja campagna
Tremò sì forte, che dello ſpavento
La mente di ſudore ancor mi bagna.
La terra lagrimoſa diede vento,
Che balenò una luce vermiglia,
La qual mi vinſe ciaſcun ſentimento:
E caddi, come l' uom, cui ſonno piglia.

But all the naked ſhades began to quake;
Their ſhuddering figures grew more pale than earth,
Soon as they heard the cruel words he ſpake:
God they blaſphem'd, their parents' injur'd worth,
And all mankind; the place, the hour, that ſaw
Their firſt formation, and their future birth.
Then were they driven, by Fate's reſiſtleſs law,
Weeping, to that ſad ſcene prepar'd for all
Who fear not God with pure devotion's awe.
Charon, with eyes of fire and words of gall,
Collects his crew, and high his oar he wields,
To ſtrike the tardy wretch who ſlights his call.
As leaves in autumn thro' the woody fields
Fly in ſucceſſion, when each trembling tree
Its ling'ring honors to the whirlwind yields;
So this bad race, condemn'd by Heaven's decree,
Succeſſive haſten from that river's ſide:
As birds, which at a call to bondage flee,
So are they wafted o'er the gloomy tide;
And ere from thence their journey is begun,
A ſecond crew awaits their hoary guide.—
My gracious Maſter kindly ſaid—My ſon!
All thoſe who in the wrath of God expire,
From every clime haſte hither, one by one;
Nor would their terrors from this ſtream retire,
Since heavenly juſtice ſo impels their mind,
That fear is quicken'd into keen deſire.
Here may no ſpirit paſs, to good inclin'd;
And hence, if Charon ſeem'd to thwart thy will,
Hence wilt thou deem his purpoſe not unkind.—
He paus'd; and horrors of approaching ill
Now made the mournful troop ſo ſtand aghaſt,
Their fears yet ſtrike me with a deadly chill!
The groaning earth ſent forth a hollow blaſt,
And flaſh'd a fiery glare of gloomy red!
The horrid ſcene my fainting power ſurpaſt:
I fell, and, as in ſleep, my ſenſes fled.

NOTE

NOTE V. VERSE 127.

The gay Boccacio, tempts th' Italian Muſe.] Boccacio was almoſt utterly unknown to our country as a Poet, when two of our moſt accompliſhed Critics reſtored his poetical reputation.

Mr. Tyrwhitt, to whom Chaucer is as deeply indebted as a Poet can be to the judgment and erudition of his commentator, has given a ſketch of Boccacio's Theſeida, in his introductory diſcourſe to the Canterbury Tales; and Mr. Warton has enriched the firſt volume of his Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry with a conſiderable ſpecimen of this very rare Italian Epic poem, of which our country is ſaid to poſſeſs but a ſingle copy.—The father of Boccacio was an Italian merchant, a native of Certaldo, near Florence, who in his travels attached himſelf to a young woman of Paris; and our Poet is ſuppoſed to have been the illegitimate offspring of that connection. He was born in 1313, and educated as a ſtudent of the canon law; but a ſight of Virgil's tomb, according to Filippo Villani, his moſt ancient Biographer, made him reſolve to relinquiſh his more irkſome purſuits, and devote himſelf entirely to the Muſes. His life ſeems to have been divided between literature and love, as he was equally remarkable for an amorous diſpoſition, and a paſſionate attachment to ſtudy. His moſt celebrated miſtreſs was Mary of Arragon, the natural daughter of Robert, King of Naples, the generous and enthuſiaſtic patron of Petrarch. To this lady, diſtinguiſhed by the name of The Fiammetta, Boccacio addreſſed his capital poem, the Theſeida; telling her, in an introductory letter, that it contained many alluſions to the particular circumſtances of their own ſecret attachment. In his latter days he retired to Certaldo, and died there in the year 1475, of a diſorder ſuppoſed to have ariſen from exceſſive application. Few authors have rendered more eſſential ſervice to the republic of letters than Boccacio, as he not only contributed very much to the improvement of his native language, but was particularly inſtrumental in promoting the revival of ancient learning: a merit which he ſhared with Petrarch. The tender and generous friendſhip which ſubſiſted between theſe two engaging authors, reflects the higheſt honour on both; and their letters to each other may be ranked among the moſt intereſting productions of that period. Boccacio compoſed, according

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to Quadrio, no leſs than thirty-four volumes. His Novels are univerſally known: his Poetical Works are as follow: 1. La Theſeida in Ottava Rima. 2. L'Amoroſa Viſione in Terza Rima. 3. Il Filoſtrato in Ottava Rima. 4. Il Ninfale Fieſolano in Ottava Rima.—He piqued himſelf on being the firſt Poet who ſung of martial ſubjects in Italian verſe; and he has been generally ſuppoſed the inventor of the Ottava Rima, the common Heroic meaſure of the Italian Muſe; but Quadrio has ſhewn that it was uſed by preceding writers; and Paſquier, in his Recherches, has quoted two ſtanzas of Thibaud king of Navarre, written in the ſame meaſure, on Blanch queen of France, who died in 1252. The neglect into which the Poems of Boccacio had fallen appears the more ſtriking, as he peculiarly prided himſelf on his poetical character; informing the world, by an inſcription on his tomb, that Poetry was his favourite purſuit—Studium fuit alma Poeſis, are the laſt words of the epitaph which he compoſed for himſelf.

NOTE VI. VERSE 142.

She ſpoke exulting, and Triſſino ſung.] Giovanni Giorgio Triſſino was born of a noble family in Vicenza, 1478: he was particularly diſtinguiſhed by a paſſion for Poetry and Architecture; and one of the very few Poets who have been rich enough to build a palace. This he is ſaid to have done from a deſign of his own, under the direction of the celebrated Palladio. He had the merit of writing the firſt regular tragedy in the Italian language, entitled Sophoniſba; but in his Epic poem he is generally allowed to have failed, though ſome learned Critics (and Gravina amongſt them) have endeavoured to ſupport the credit of that performance. His ſubject was the expulſion of the Goths from Italy by Beliſarius; and his poem conſiſts of twenty-ſeven books, in blank verſe. He addreſſed it to the Emperor Charles the Vth; and profeſſes in his Dedication to have taken Ariſtotle for his preceptor, and Homer for his guide.

The reader will excuſe a trifling anachroniſm, in my naming Triſſino before Arioſto, for poetical reaſons. The Italia Liberata of the former was firſt publiſhed in 1548; the Orlando Furioſo, in 1515. Triſſino died at Rome, 1550; Arioſto at Ferrara, 1533.

NOTE

NOTE VII. Verse 194.

Of a poetic Sire the more poetic Son.] The reputation of Torquato Taſſo has almoſt eclipſed that of his father Bernardo, who was himſelf a conſiderable Poet, and left two productions of the Epic kind, L'Amadigi, and Il Floridante: the latter remained unfiniſhed at his death, but was afterwards publiſhed in its imperfect ſtate by his ſon; who has ſpoken of his father's poetry with filial regard, in his different critical works. The Amadigi was written at the requeſt of ſeveral Spaniſh Grandees, in the court of Charles the Vth, and firſt printed in Venice by Giolito, 1560. The curious reader may find an entertaining account of the Author's ideas in compoſing this work, among his Letters, volume the firſt, page 198. I cannot help remarking, that the letter referred to contains a ſimile which Torquato has introduced in the opening of his Jeruſalem Delivered.

The Italians have formed a very pleaſing and valuable work, by collecting the letters of their eminent Painters; which contain much information on points relating to their art. The letters of their Poets, if properly ſelected, might alſo form a few intereſting volumes: as a proof of this, I ſhall inſert a ſhort letter of the younger Taſſo, becauſe it ſeems to have eſcaped the notice of his Biographers, and relates the remarkable circumſtance of his having deliberated on five different ſubjects before he decided in favour of Goffredo:

Al M. Illuſtre Sig. Conte Ferrante Eſtenſe Taſſone.

Io ho ſcritto queſta mattina a V. S. che io deſidero di far due Poemi a mio guſto; e ſebben per elezione non cambierei il ſoggetto che una volta preſi; nondimeno per ſoddisfar il ſignor principe gli do l' elezione di tutti queſti ſoggetti, i quali mi paijono ſovra gli altri atti a ricever la forma eroica.

Eſpedizion di Goffredo, e degli altri principi contra gl' Infedeli, e ritorno. Dove avrò occaſione di lodar le famiglie d' Europa, che io vorrò.

Eſpedizion di Beliſario contra i Goti.

Di Narſete contra i Goti, e diſcorro d' un principe. E in queſti

vrei grandiſſima occaſione di lodar le coſe di Spagna e d' Italia e di Grecia e l' origine di caſa d' Auſtria.

Eſpedizion di Carlo il magno contra Lanſoni.

Eſpedizion di Carlo contra i Longobardi. In queſti troverei l' origine di tutte le famiglie grandi di Germania, di Francia, e d' Italia, e 'l ritorno d' un principe.

E ſebben alcuni di queſti ſoggetti ſono ſtati preſi, non importa; perche io cercherei di trattargli neglio, e a gindicio d' Ariſtotele.

Opere di Torquato Taſſo, tom. ix. p. 240.

This letter is the more worthy of notice, as the ſubject on which Taſſo fixed has been called by Voltaire, and perhaps very juſtly, Le plus grand qu'on ait jamais choiſi. Le Taſſe l'a traité dignement, adds the lively Critic, with unuſual candour; yet in his ſubſequent remarks he is peculiarly ſevere on the magic of the Italian Poet. The merits of Taſſo are very ably defended againſt the injuſtice of French criticiſm, and particularly that of Boileau and Voltaire, in the well-known Letters on Chivalry and Romance. Indeed the genius of this injured Poet ſeems at length to triumph in the country where he was moſt inſulted, as the French have lately attempted a poetical verſion of his Jeruſalem.

I enter not into the hiſtory of Taſſo, or that of his rival Arioſto, becauſe the public has lately received from Mr. Hoole a judicious account of their lives, prefixed to his elegant verſions of their reſpective Poems.

NOTE VIII. Verse 197.

Shall gay Taſſoni want his feſtive crown.] Aleſſandro Taſſoni, the ſuppoſed inventor of the modern Heroi-comic Poetry, was born at Modena, 1565. His family was noble; but his parents dying during his infancy, left him expoſed to vexatious law-ſuits, which abſorbed a great part of his patrimony, and rendered him dependant. In 1599 he was engaged as Secretary to Cardinal Aſcanio Colonna, whom he attended on an embaſſy into Spain. He was occaſionally diſpatched into Italy on the ſervice of that Prelate, and in the courſe of one of theſe expeditions wrote his Obſervations on Petrarch. In 1605 he is ſuppoſed

to have quitted the ſervice of the Cardinal, and to have lived in a ſtate of freedom at Rome, where, in 1607, he became the chief of a literary ſociety, entitled Academia degli Umoriſti. He was afterwards employed in the ſervice of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy; which, after ſuffering many vexations in it, he quitted with a deſign of devoting himſelf to ſtudy and retirement. But this deſign he was induced to relinquiſh, and to ſerve the Cardinal Lodoviſio, nephew of Pope Gregory XV. from whom he received a conſiderable ſtipend. On the death of this patron, in 1632, he was recalled to his native city by Francis the Firſt, Duke of Modena, and obtained an honourable eſtabliſhment in the court of that Prince. Age had now rendered him unable to enjoy his good fortune: his health declined in the year of his return, and he expired in April 1635. His genius was particularly diſpoſed to lively ſatire; and the incidents of his life had a tendency to increaſe that diſpoſition. After having paſſed many vexatious and unprofitable years in the ſervice of the Great, he had his portrait painted, with a fig in his hand; and Muratori ſuppoſes him to have written theſe two lines on the occaſion:

Dextera cur ficum, quæris, mea geſtet inanem:
Longi operis merces hæc fuit; aula dedit.

His celebrated Poem, La Secchia rapita, was written, as he has himſelf declared, in 1611; begun in April, and finiſhed in October. It was circulated in MS. received with the utmoſt avidity, and firſt printed at Paris 1622. In a catalogue of the numerous editions of the Secchia, which Muratori has prefixed to his Life of Taſſoni, he includes an Engliſh tranſlation of it, printed 1715.

NOTE IX. VERSE 209.

And raſhly judges that her Vega's lyre.] The famous Lope de Vega, frequently called the Shakeſpear of Spain, is perhaps the moſt fertile Poet in the annals of Parnaſſus; and it would be difficult to name any author, ancient or modern, ſo univerſally idolized while living by all ranks of people, and ſo magnificently rewarded by the liberality of the Great. He was the ſon of Felix de Vega and Franciſca Fernandez,

who were both deſcended from honourable families, and lived in the neighbourhood of Madrid. Our Poet was born in that city, on the 25th of November 1562. He was, according to his own expreſſion, a Poet from his cradle; and, beginning to make verſes before he had learned to write, he uſed to bribe his elder ſchool-fellows with a part of his breakfaſt, to commit to paper the lines he had compoſed. Having loſt his father while he was ſtill a child, he engaged in a frolic, very natural to a lively boy, and wandered with another lad to various parts of Spain, till, having ſpent their money, and being conducted before a magiſtrate at Segovia, for offering to ſell a few trinkets, they were ſent home again to Madrid. Soon after this adventure, our young Poet was taken under the protection of Geronimo Manrique, Biſhop of Avila, and began to diſtinguiſh himſelf by his dramatic compoſitions, which were received with great applauſe by the public, though their author had not yet completed his education; for, after this period, he became a member of the univerſity of Alcala, where he devoted himſelf for four years to the ſtudy of philoſophy. He was then engaged as Secretary to the Duke of Alva, and wrote his Arcadia in compliment to that patron; who is frequently mentioned in his Occaſional Poems. He quitted that employment on his marriage with Iſabel de Urbina, a lady (ſays his friend and biographer Perez de Montalvan) beautiful without artifice, and virtuous without affectation. His domeſtic happineſs was ſoon interrupted by a painful incident:—Having written ſome lively verſes in ridicule of a perſon who had taken ſome injurious freedom with his character, he received a challenge in conſequence of his wit; and happening, in the duel which enſued, to give his adverſary a dangerous wound, he was obliged to fly from his family, and ſhelter himſelf in Valencia. He reſided there a conſiderable time; but connubial affection recalled him to Madrid. His wife died in the year of his return. His affliction on this event led him to relinquiſh his favourite ſtudies, and embark on board the Armada which was then preparing for the invaſion of England. He had a brother who ſerved in that fleet as a lieutenant; and being ſhot in an engagement with ſome Dutch veſſels, his virtues were celebrated by our afflicted Poet, whoſe heart was peculiarly alive to every generous affection. After the ill ſucceſs of the Armada, the diſconſolate Lope de Vega returned to Madrid, and became Secretary to the Marquis

of Malpica, to whom he has addreſſed a grateful Sonnet. From the ſervice of this Patron he paſſed into the houſehold of the Count of Lemos, whom he celebrates as an inimitable Poet. He was once more induced to quit his attendance on the Great, for the more inviting comforts of a married life. His ſecond choice was Juana de Guardio, of noble birth and ſingular beauty. By this lady he had two children; a ſon, who died in his infancy, and a daughter, named Feliciana, who ſurvived her father. The death of his little boy is ſaid to have haſtened that of his wife, whom he had the misfortune to loſe in about ſeven years after his marriage. Having now experienced the precarioufneſs of all human enjoyments, he devoted himſelf to a religious life, and fulfilled all the duties of it with the moſt exemplary piety; ſtill continuing to produce an aſtoniſhing variety of poetical compoſitions. His talents and his virtues procured him many unſolicited honours. Pope Urban the VIIIth ſent him the Croſs of Malta, with the title of Doctor in Divinity, and appointed him to a place of profit in the Apoſtolic Chamber; favours for which he expreſſed his gratitude by dedicating his Corona Tragica (a long poem on the fate of Mary Queen of Scots) to that liberal Pontiff. In his ſeventy-third year he felt the approaches of death, and prepared himſelf for it with the utmoſt compoſure and devotion. His laſt hours were attended by many of his intimate friends, and particularly his chief patron the Duke of Seſſa, whom he made his executor; leaving him the care of his daughter Feliciana, and of his various manuſcripts. The manner in which he took leave of thoſe he loved was moſt tender and affecting. He ſaid to his Diſciple and Biographer, Montalvan, That true fame conſiſted in being good; and that he would willingly exchange all the applauſes he had received, to add a ſingle deed of virtue to the actions of his life. Having given his dying benediction to his daughter, and performed the laſt ceremonies of his religion, he expired on the 25th of Auguſt 1635.

The ſplendor of his funeral was equal to the reſpect paid to him while living.—His magnificent patron, the Duke of Seſſa, invited the chief nobility of the kingdom to attend it. The ceremony was prolonged through the courſe of ſeveral days; and three ſermons in honour of the deceaſed were delivered by three of the moſt celebrated preachers. Theſe

are printed with the works of the Poet, and may be conſidered as curious ſpecimens of the falſe eloquence which prevailed at that time. A volume of encomiaſtic verſes, chiefly Spaniſh, and written by more than a hundred and fifty of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters in Spain, was publiſhed ſoon after the death of this lamented Bard. To this collection his friend and diſciple Perez de Montalvan prefixed a circumſtantial account of his life and death, which I have chiefly followed in the preceding narrative. An ingenious Traveller, who has lately publiſhed a pleaſing volume of Letters on the Poetry of Spain, has imputed the duel in which Lope de Vega was engaged to the gallantries of his firſt wife; but Montalvan's relation of that adventure clears the honor of the lady, whoſe innocence is ſtill farther ſupported by a poem written in her praiſe by Pedro de Medina Medinilla: it is printed in the works of our Poet, who is introduced in it, under the name of Belardo, celebrating the excellencies and lamenting the loſs of his departed Iſabel.

Of the perſon and manners of Lope de Vega, his friend Montalvan has only given this general account:—that his frame of body was particularly ſtrong, and preſerved by temperance in continued health;—that in converſation he was mild and unaſſuming; courteous to all, and to women peculiarly gallant;—very eager when engaged in the buſineſs of his friends, and ſomewhat careleſs in the management of his own. Of his wealth and charity I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak in a ſubſequent note. The chief expences in which he indulged himſelf were books and pictures; of the latter, he diſtributed a few as legacies to his intimate friends: to the Duke of Seſſa, a fine portrait of himſelf; and to me, ſays Montalvan, another, painted when he was young, ſurrounded by dogs, monkies, and other monſters, and writing in the midſt of them, without attending to their noiſe.——Of the honours paid to this extraordinary Poet, his Biographer aſſerts that no perſon of eminence viſited Spain without ſeeking his perſonal acquaintance; that men yielded him precedence when they met him in the ſtreets, and women ſaluted him with benedictions when he paſſed under their windows. If ſuch homage can be deſerved by the moſt unwearied application to poetry, Lope de Vega was certainly entitled to it. He declared that he conſtantly wrote five ſheets a day; and his biographers, who have formed a calculation from this account, conclude the number of his verſes to be

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no leſs than 21,316,000. His country has very lately publiſhed an elegant edition of his poems in 19 quarto volumes; his dramatic works are to be added to this collection, and will probably be ſtill more voluminous. I ſhall ſpeak only of the former.—Among his poems there are ſeveral of the Epic kind; the three following appear to me the moſt remarkable. 1. La Dragontea. 2. La Hermoſura de Angelica. 3. La Jeruſalem Conquiſtada. The Dragontea conſiſts of ten cantos, on the laſt expedition and death of our great naval hero Sir Francis Drake, whom the Poet, from his exceſſive partiality to his country, conſiders as an avaricious pirate, or rather, as he chuſes to call him, a marine Dragon: and it may be ſufficient to obſerve that he has treated him accordingly. The poem on Angelica ſeems to have been written in emulation of Arioſto, and it is founded on a hint in that Poet: it was compoſed in the early part of our Author's life, and contains many compliments to his ſovereign Philip the IId: it conſiſts of 20 cantos, and cloſes with Angelica's being reſtored to her beloved Medoro. In his Jeruſalem Conquiſtada he enters the liſts with Taſſo, whom he mentions in his preface as having ſung the firſt part of the hiſtory which he had choſen for his ſubject. From the great name of Lope de Vega, I had ſome thoughts of preſenting to the reader a ſketch of this his moſt remarkable poem; but as an Epic Poet he appears to me ſo much inferior to Taſſo, and to his countryman and cotemporary Ercilla, that I am unwilling to ſwell theſe extenſive notes by an enlarged deſcription of ſo unſucceſsful a work: the Author has propheſied in the cloſe of it, that, although neglected by his own age, it would be eſteemed by futurity:—a ſingular proof that even the moſt favoured writers are frequently diſpoſed to declaim againſt the period in which they live. If Lope de Vega could think himſelf neglected, what Poet may ever expect to be ſatisfied with popular applauſe?—But to return to his Jeruſalem Conquiſtada. Richard the Second of England, and Alphonſo the Eighth of Caſtile, are the chief heroes of the poem; which contains twenty cantos; and cloſes with the unfortunate return of theſe confederate Kings, and the death of Saladin. It was firſt printed 1609, more than twenty years after the firſt appearance of Taſſo's Jeruſalem.——One of the moſt amiable peculiarities in the character of Lope de Vega, is the extreme liberality with which he commends the merit of his rivals. In his Laurel de Apollo, he celebrates

brates all the eminent Spaniſh and Portugueze Poets; he ſpeaks both of Camoens and Ercilla with the warmeſt applauſe. Among the moſt pleaſing paſſages in this poem is a compliment which he pays to his father, who was, like the father of Taſſo, a Poet of conſiderable talents.

Among the ſmaller pieces of Lope de Vega, there are two particularly curious; a deſcriptive poem on the garden of his patron the Duke of Alva, and a ſonnet in honour of the Invincible Armada: the latter may be conſidered as a complete model of Spaniſh bombaſt: "Go forth and burn the world," ſays the Poet, addreſſing himſelf to that mighty fleet; "my ſighs will furniſh your ſails with a never-failing wind; and my breaſt will ſupply your cannon with inexhauſtible fire."——Perhaps this may be equalled by a Spaniſh character of our Poet, with which I ſhall cloſe my imperfect account of him. It is his friend and biographer Montalvan, who, in the opening of his life, beſtows on him the following titles: El Doctor Frey Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, Portento del Orbe, Gloria de la Nacion, Luſtre de la Patria, Oracula de la Lengua, Centro de la Fama, Aſſumpio de la Invidia, Cuydado de la Fortuna, Fenix de los Siglos, Principe de los Verſos, Orfeo de las Ciencias, Apolo de las Muſas, Horacio de los Poetas, Virgilio de los Epicos, Homero de los Heroycos, Pindaro de los Lyricos, Sofocles de los Tragicos, y Terencio de los Comicos, Unico entre los Mayores, Mayor entre los Grandes, y Grande a todas Luzes, y en todas Materias.

NOTE X. VERSE 239.

The brave Ercilla ſounds, with potent breath,
His Epic trumpet in the fields of death.] Don Alonzo de Ercilla y Zuniga was equally diſtinguiſhed as a Hero and a Poet; but this exalted character, notwithſtanding his double claim to our regard, is almoſt totally unknown in our country, and I ſhall therefore endeavour to give the Engliſh reader the beſt idea that I can, both of his gallant life, and of his ſingular poem.—He was born in Madrid, on the 7th of Auguſt 1533, the third ſon of Fortun Garcia de Ercilla, who, though deſcended from a noble family, purſued the profeſſion of the law, and was ſo remarkable for his talents, that he acquired the appellation of "The ſubtle Spaniard." The mother of our Poet was alſo noble, and from her he inherited his

ſecond

ſecond title, Zuniga: Ercilla was the name of an ancient caſtle in Biſcay, which had been long in the poſſeſſion of his paternal anceſtors. He loſt his father while he was yet an infant, a circumſtance which had great influence on his future life; for his mother was received, after the deceaſe of her huſband, into the houſehold of the Empreſs Iſabella, the wife of Charles the Vth, and had thus an early opportunity of introducing our young Alonzo into the palace. He ſoon obtained an appointment there, in the character of page to the Infant Don Philip, to whoſe ſervice he devoted himſelf with the moſt heroic enthuſiaſm, though Philip was a maſter who little deſerved ſo generous an attachment. At the age of fourteen, he attended that Prince in the ſplendid progreſs which he made, at the deſire of his Imperial father, through the principal cities of the Netherlands, and through parts of Italy and Germany. This ſingular expedition is very circumſtantially recorded in a folio volume, by a Spaniſh hiſtorian named Juan Chriſtoval Calvete de Eſtrella, whoſe work affords a very curious and ſtriking picture of the manners and ceremonies of that martial and romantic age. All the cities which were viſited by the Prince contended with each other in magnificent feſtivity: the brilliant ſeries of literary and warlike pageants which they exhibited, though they anſwered not their deſign of conciliating the affection of the ſullen Philip, might probably awaken the genius of our youthful Poet, and excite his ambition to acquire both poetical and military fame. In 1551, he returned with the Prince into Spain, and continued there for three years; at the end of which he attended his royal maſter to England on his marriage with Queen Mary, which was celebrated at Wincheſter in the ſummer of 1554. At this period Ercilla firſt aſſumed the military character; for his ſovereign received advice, during his reſidence at London, that the martial natives of Aranco, a diſtrict on the coaſt of Chile, had revolted from the Spaniſh government, and diſpatched an experienced officer, named Alderete, who attended him in England, to ſubdue the inſurrection, inveſting him with the command of the rebellious province. Ercilla embarked with Alderete; but that officer dying in his paſſage, our Poet proceeded to Lima. Don Hurtado de Mendoza, who commanded there as Viceroy of Peru, appointed his ſon Don Garcia to ſupply the place of Alderete, and ſent him with a conſiderable force to oppoſe the Arancanians. Ercilla was engaged in this enterprize, and greatly

greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the obſtinate conteſt which enſued. The noble character of the Barbarians who maintained this unequal ſtruggle, and the many ſplendid feats of valour which this ſcene afforded, led our author to the ſingular deſign of making the war, in which he was himſelf engaged, the ſubject of an Heroic poem; which he entitled "La Araucana," from the name of the country. As many of his own particular adventures may be found in the following ſummary of his work, I ſhall not here enlarge on his military exploits; but proceed to one of the moſt mortifying events of his life, which he briefly mentions in the concluſion of his poem. After paſſing with great honour through many and various perils, he was on the point of ſuffering a diſgraceful death, from the raſh orders of his young and inconſiderate Commander. On his return from an expedition of adventure and diſcovery, to the Spaniſh city of Imperial, he was preſent at a ſcene of public feſtivity diſplayed there, to celebrate the acceſſion of Philip the IId to the crown of Spain; at a kind of tournament, there aroſe an idle diſpute between Ercilla and Don Juan de Pineda, in the heat of which the two diſputants drew their ſwords; many of the ſpectators joined in the broil; and, a report ariſing that the quarrel was a mere pretence, to conceal ſome mutinous deſign, the haſty Don Garcia, their General, committed the two antagoniſts to priſon, and ſentenced them both to be publicly beheaded. Ercilla himſelf declares, he was conducted to the ſcaffold before his precipitate judge diſcovered the iniquity of the ſentence; but his innocence appeared juſt time enough to ſave him; and he ſeems to have been fully reinſtated in the good opinion of Don Garcia, as, among the complimentary ſonnets addreſſed to Ercilla, there is one which bears the name of his General, in which he ſtyles him the Divine Alonzo, and celebrates both his military and poetical genius. But Ercilla ſeems to have been deeply wounded by this affront; for, quitting Chile, he went to Callao, the port of Lima, and there embarked on an expedition againſt a Spaniſh rebel, named Lope de Aguirre, who, having murdered his captain, and uſurped the chief power, was perpetrating the moſt cruel enormities in the ſettlement of Venezuela. But Ercilla learned, on his arrival at Panama, that this barbarous uſurper was deſtroyed; he therefore reſolved, as his health was much impaired by the hardſhips he had paſſed, to return to Spain. He arrived there in the twenty-

ninth year of his age; but ſoon left it, and travelled, as he himſelf informs us, through France, Italy, Germany, Sileſia, Moravia, and Pannonia; but the particulars of this expedition are unknown. In the year 1570 he appeared again at Madrid, and was married to Maria Bazan, a lady whom he contrives to celebrate in the courſe of his military poem. He is ſaid to have been afterwards gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Emperor Rodolph the IId, a prince who had been educated at Madrid; but the connection of our Poet with this Monarch is very indiſtinctly recorded; and indeed all the latter part of his life is little known. In the year 1580 he reſided at Madrid, in a ſtate of retirement and poverty. The time and circumſtances of his death are uncertain: it is proved that he was living in the year 1596, by the evidence of a Spaniſh writer named Moſquera, who, in a treatiſe of military diſcipline, ſpeaks of Ercilla as engaged at that time in celebrating the victories of Don Alvaro Bazan, Marques de Santa Cruz, in a poem which has never appeared, and is ſuppoſed to have been left imperfect at his death. Some anecdotes related of our Poet afford us ground to hope that his various merits were not entirely unrewarded. It is ſaid, that in ſpeaking to his ſovereign Philip, he was ſo overwhelmed by diffidence that language failed him: "Don Alonzo! (replied the King) ſpeak to me in writing."—He did ſo, and obtained his requeſt. The Spaniſh Hiſtorian Ovalle, who has written an account of Chile, in which he frequently ſupports his narration by the authority of Ercilla, affirms that our Poet preſented his work to Philip with his own hand, and received a recompence from the King. But in this circumſtance I fear the Hiſtorian was miſtaken, as he ſuppoſes it to have happened on the return of Ercilla from Chile; and our Poet, in a diſtinct portion of his work, which was not publiſhed till many years after that period, expreſsly declares, in addreſſing himſelf to Philip, that all his attempts to ſerve him had been utterly unrequited. Ercilla left no legitimate family; but had ſome natural children, the moſt eminent of which was a daughter, who was advantageouſly married to a nobleman of Portugal.

In that elegant collection of Spaniſh Poets, "*Parnaſo Eſpañol*," there is a pleaſing little amorous poem, written by Ercilla in his youth, which is peculiarly commended by Lope de Vega; who has beſtowed a very generous encomium on our Poet, in his "*Laurel de Apolo.*" But the great and

and ſingular work which has juſtly rendered Ercilla immortal, is his Poem entitled Araucana, which was publiſhed in three ſeparate parts: the firſt appeared in 1577; he added the ſecond in the ſucceeding year; and in 1590 he printed a complete edition of the whole. It was applauded by the moſt eminent writers of Spain; and Cervantes, in ſpeaking of Don Quixote's Library, has ranked it among the choiceſt treaſures of the Caſtilian Muſe. Voltaire, who ſpeaks of Ercilla with his uſual ſpirit and inaccuracy, has the merit of having made our Poet more generally known, though his own acquaintance with him appears to have been extremely ſlight; for he affirms that Ercilla was in the battle of Saint Quintin: a miſtake into which he never could have fallen, had he read the Araucana. Indeed the undiſtinguiſhing cenſure which he paſſes on the poem in general, after commending one particular paſſage, ſufficiently proves him a perfect ſtranger to many ſubſequent parts of the work; yet his remark on the inequality of the Poet is juſt. Ercilla is certainly unequal; but, with all his defects, he appears to me one of the moſt extraordinary and engaging characters in the poetical world. Perhaps I am a little partial to him, from the accidental circumſtance of having firſt read his poem with a departed friend, whoſe opinions are very dear to me, and who was particularly fond of this military Bard. However this may be, my idea of Ercilla's merit has led me to hazard the following extenſive ſketch of his Work: — it has ſwelled to a much larger ſize than I at firſt intended; for I was continually tempted to extend it, by the deſire of not injuring the peculiar excellencies of this wonderful Poet. If I have not utterly failed in that deſire, the Engliſh reader will be enabled to judge, and to enjoy an author, who, conſidering his ſubject and its execution, may be ſaid to ſtand ſingle and unparalleled in the hoſt of Poets. His beauties and his defects are of ſo obvious a nature, that I ſhall not enlarge upon them; but let it be remembered, that his poem was compoſed amidſt the toils and perils of the moſt fatiguing and hazardous ſervice, and that his verſes were ſometimes written on ſcraps of leather, from the want of better materials. His ſtyle is remarkably pure and perſpicuous, and, notwithſtanding the reſtraint of rhyme, it has frequently all the eaſe, the ſpirit, and the volubility of Homer. I wiſh not, however, to conceal his defects; and I have therefore given a very fair account of the ſtrange epiſode he intro-

duces concerning the hiſtory of Dido, which has juſtly fallen under the ridicule of Voltaire. I muſt however obſerve, as an apology for Ercilla, that many Bards of his country have conſidered it as a point of honour to defend the reputation of this injured lady, and to attack Virgil with a kind of poetical Quixotiſm for having ſlandered the chaſtity of ſo ſpotleſs a heroine. If my memory does not deceive me, both Lope de Vega and Quevedo have employed their pens as the champions of Dido. We may indeed very readily join the laugh of the lively Frenchman againſt

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SONETO

DE LA SEÑORA DOÑA LEONOR DE ICIZ,
SEÑORA DE LA BARONIA DE RAFALES
A DON ALONSO DE ERCILLA.

Mil bronces para eſtatuas ya forxados,
Mil lauros de tus obras premio honroſo
Te ofrece Eſpaña, Ercilla generoſo,
Por tu pluma y tu lanza tan ganados.
Houreſe tu valor entre ſoldados,
Invidie tu nobleza el valeroſo,
Y buſque en tí el poeta mas famoſo
Lima para ſus verſos mas limados.
Derrame por el mundo tus loores
La fama, y eternice tu memoria,
Porque jamás el tiempo la conſuma.
Gocen ya, ſin temor de que hay mayores
Tus hechos, y tus libros de igual gloria,
Pues la han ganado igual la eſpada y pluma.

againſt our Poet on this occaſion; but let us recollect that Ercilla has infinitely more Homeric ſpirit, and that his poem contains more genuine Epic beauties, than can be found in Voltaire.

Ercilla has been honoured with many poetical encomiums by the writers of his own country; and, as I believe the moſt elegant compliment which has been paid to his genius is the production of a Spaniſh lady, I ſhall cloſe this account of him with a tranſlation of the Sonnet, in which ſhe celebrates both the Hero and the Poet.

SONNET

FROM THE LADY LEONORA DE ICIZ, BARONESS OF RAFALES, TO DON ALONZO DE ERCILLA.

Marble, that forms the Hero's mimic frame,
And laurels, that reward the Poet's ſtrain,
Accept, Ercilla, from thy grateful Spain!
Thy ſword and pen alike this tribute claim.
Our Warriors honor thy heroic name;
Thy birth is envy'd by Ambition's train;
Thy verſes teach the Bard of happieſt vein
A finer poliſh, and a nobler aim.
May glory round the world thy merit ſpread!
In Memory's volume may thy praiſes ſtand
In characters that time ſhall ne'er deſtroy!
Thy ſongs, and thy exploits, without the dread
To be ſurpaſs'd by a ſuperior hand,
With equal right their equal fame enjoy!

A SKETCH

A SKETCH OF THE ARAUCANA.

THE Poem of Ercilla opens with the following expoſition of his ſubject:

I Sing not love of ladies, nor of fights
Devis'd for gentle dames by courteous knights,
Nor feaſts, nor tourneys, nor that tender care
Which prompts the Gallant to regale the Fair;
But the bold deeds of Valor's fav'rite train,
Thoſe undegenerate ſons of warlike Spain,
Who made Arauco their ſtern laws embrace,
And bent beneath their yoke her untam'd race.
Of tribes diſtinguiſh'd in the field I ſing;
Of nations who diſdain the name of King;
Courage, that danger only taught to grow,
And challenge honour from a generous foe;
And perſevering toils of pureſt fame,
And feats that aggrandize the Spaniſh name:
For the brave actions of the vanquiſh'd ſpread
The brighteſt glory round the victor's head.

He then addreſſes his work to his ſovereign, Philip the Second, and devotes his firſt Canto to the deſcription of that part of the new world which forms the ſcene of his action, and is called Arauco; a diſtrict in the province of Chile. He paints the ſingular character and various cuſtoms of its warlike inhabitants with great clearneſs and ſpirit. In many points they bear a ſtriking reſemblance to the ancient Germans, as they are drawn with a kind of poetical energy by the ſtrong pencil of Tacitus. The firſt Canto cloſes with a brief account how this martial province was ſubdued by a Spaniſh officer named Valdivia; with an intimation

intimation that his negligence in his new dominion gave birth to thoſe important exploits which the Poet propoſes to celebrate.

CANTO II.

ERCILLA begins his Cantos much in the manner of Arioſto, with a moral reflection; ſometimes rather too much dilated, but generally expreſſed in eaſy, elegant, and ſpirited verſe.—The following lines faintly imitate the two firſt ſtanzas of his ſecond Canto:

Many there are who, in this mortal ſtrife,
Have reach'd the ſlippery heights of ſplendid life:
For Fortune's ready hand its ſuccour lent;
Smiling ſhe rais'd them up the ſteep aſcent,
To hurl them headlong from that lofty ſeat
To which ſhe led their unſuſpecting feet;
E'en at the moment when all fears diſperſe,
And their proud fancy ſees no ſad reverſe.
Little they think, beguil'd by fair ſucceſs,
That Joy is but the herald of Diſtreſs:
The haſty wing of time eſcapes their ſight,
And thoſe dark evils that attend his flight:
Vainly they dream, with gay preſumption warm,
Fortune for them will take a ſteadier form;
She, unconcern'd at what her victims feel,
Turns with her wonted haſte her fatal wheel.

After blaming his countrymen for abuſing their good fortune, the Poet celebrates, in the following ſpirited manner, the eagerneſs and indignation with which the Indians prepared to wreak their vengeance on their Spaniſh oppreſſors:

The Indians firſt, by novelty diſmay'd,
As Gods rever'd us, and as Gods obey'd;
But when they found we were of woman born,
Their homage turn'd to enmity and ſcorn:

Their childiſh error, when our weakneſs ſhow'd,
They bluſh'd at what their ignorance beſtow'd;
Fiercely they burnt, with anger and with ſhame,
To ſee their maſters but of mortal frame.
Diſdaining cold and cowardly delay,
They ſeek atonement, on no diſtant day:
Prompt and reſolv'd, in quick debate they join,
To form of deep revenge their dire deſign.
Impatient that their bold decree ſhould ſpread,
And ſhake the world around with ſudden dread,
Th' aſſembling Chieftains led ſo large a train,
Their ready hoſt o'erſpread th' extenſive plain.
No ſummons now the ſoldier's heart requires;
The thirſt of battle every breaſt inſpires;
No pay, no promiſe of reward, they aſk,
Keen to accompliſh their ſpontaneous taſk;
And, by the force of one avenging blow,
Cruſh and annihilate their foreign foe.
Of ſome brave Chiefs, who to this council came,
Well may'ſt thou, Memory, preſerve the name;
Tho' rude and ſavage, yet of noble ſoul,
Juſtly they claim their place on Glory's roll,
Who robbing Spain of many a gallant ſon,
In ſo confin'd a ſpace ſuch victories won;
Whoſe fame ſome living Spaniards yet may ſpread,
Too well atteſted by our warlike dead.

The Poet proceeds to mention, in the manner of Homer, but in a much ſhorter catalogue, the principal chieftains, and the number of their reſpective vaſſals.

Uncouthly as their names muſt ſound to an Engliſh ear, it ſeems neceſſary to run through the liſt, as theſe free and noble-minded ſavages act ſo diſtinguiſhed a part in the courſe of the poem.—Tucapel ſtands firſt; renowned for the moſt inveterate enmity to the Chriſtians, and leader of three thouſand vaſſals: Angol, a valiant youth, attended by four thouſand: Cayocupil, with three; and Millarapue, an elder chief, with

with five thouſand: Paycabi, with three thouſand; and Lemolemo, with ſix: Maregnano, Gualèmo, and Lebopia, with three thouſand each: Elicura, diſtinguiſhed by ſtrength of body and deteſtation of ſervitude, with ſix thouſand; and the ancient Colocolo with a ſuperior number: Ongolmo, with four thouſand; and Puren, with ſix; the fierce and gigantic Lincoza with a ſtill larger train. Peteguelen, lord of the valley of Arauco, prevented from perſonal attendance by the Chriſtians, diſpatches ſix thouſand of his retainers to the aſſembly: the moſt diſtinguiſhed of his party are Thomè and Andalican. The Lord of the maritime province of Pilmayquen, the bold Caupolican, is alſo unable to appear at the opening of the council. Many other Chieftains attended, whoſe names the Poet ſuppreſſes, leſt his prolixity ſhould offend. As they begin their buſineſs in the ſtyle of the ancient Germans, with a plentiful banquet, they ſoon grow exaſperated with liquor, and a violent quarrel enſues concerning the command of the forces for the projected war: an honour which almoſt every chieftain was arrogant enough to challenge for himſelf. In the midſt of this turbulent debate, the ancient Colocolo delivers the following harangue, which Voltaire prefers (and I think with great juſtice) to the ſpeech of Neſtor, on a ſimilar occaſion, in the firſt Iliad.

Aſſembled Chiefs! ye guardians of the land!
Think not I mourn from thirſt of loſt command,
To find your rival ſpirits thus purſue
A poſt of honour which I deem my due.
Theſe marks of age, you ſee, ſuch thoughts diſown
In me, departing for the world unknown;
But my warm love, which ye have long poſſeſt,
Now prompts that counſel which you'll find the beſt.
Why ſhould we now for marks of glory jar?
Why wiſh to ſpread our martial name afar?
Cruſh'd as we are by Fortune's cruel ſtroke,
And bent beneath an ignominious yoke,
Ill can our minds ſuch noble pride maintain,
While the fierce Spaniard holds our galling chain.
Your generous fury here ye vainly ſhew;
Ah! rather pour it on th' embattled foe!

What frenzy has your ſouls of ſenſe bereav'd ?
Ye ruſh to ſelf-perdition, unperceiv'd.
'Gainſt your own vitals would ye lift thoſe hands,
Whoſe vigor ought to burſt oppreſſion's bands ?
If a deſire of death this rage create,
O die not yet in this diſgraceful ſtate !
Turn your keen arms, and this indignant flame,
Againſt the breaſt of thoſe who ſink your fame,
Who made the world a witneſs of your ſhame.
Haſte ye to caſt theſe hated bonds away,
In this the vigor of your ſouls diſplay ;
Nor blindly laviſh, from your country's veins,
Blood that may yet redeem her from her chains.
E'en while I thus lament, I ſtill admire
The fervor of your ſouls ; they give me fire :
But, juſtly trembling at their fatal bent,
I dread ſome dire calamitous event ;
Leſt in your rage Diſſention's frantic hand
Should cut the ſinews of our native land.
If ſuch its doom, my thread of being burſt,
And let your old compeer expire the firſt !
Shall this ſhrunk frame, thus bow'd by age's weight,
Live the weak witneſs of a nation's fate ?
No : let ſome friendly ſword, with kind relief,
Forbid its ſinking in that ſcene of grief.
Happy whoſe eyes in timely darkneſs cloſe,
Sav'd from that worſt of ſights, his country's woes !
Yet, while I can, I make your weal my care,
And for the public good my thoughts declare.
Equal ye are in courage and in worth ;
Heaven has aſſign'd to all an equal birth :
In wealth, in power, and majeſty of ſoul,
Each Chief ſeems worthy of the world's controul.
Theſe gracious gifts, not gratefully beheld,
To this dire ſtrife your daring minds impell'd.
But on your generous valor I depend,
That all our country's woes will ſwiftly end.

A Leader

A Leader ſtill our preſent ſtate demands,
To guide to vengeance our impatient bands;
Fit for this hardy taſk that Chief I deem,
Who longeſt may ſuſtain a maſſive beam:
Your rank is equal, let your force be try'd,
And for the ſtrongeſt let his ſtrength decide.

The Chieftains acquieſce in this propoſal; which, as Voltaire juſtly obſerves, is very natural in a nation of ſavages. The beam is produced, and of a ſize ſo enormous, that the Poet declares himſelf afraid to ſpecify its weight. The firſt Chieftains who engage in the trial ſupport it on their ſhoulders five and ſix hours each; Tucapel fourteen; and Lincoza more than double that number; when the aſſembly, conſidering his ſtrength as almoſt ſupernatural, is eager to beſtow on him the title of General; but in the moment he is exulting in this new honour, Caupolican arrives without attendants. His perſon and character are thus deſcribed by the Poet:

Tho' from his birth one darken'd eye he drew
(The viewleſs orb was of the granate's hue)
Nature, who partly robb'd him of his ſight,
Repaid this failure by redoubled might.
This noble youth was of the higheſt ſtate;
His actions honour'd, and his words of weight:
Prompt and reſolv'd in every generous cauſe,
A friend to Juſtice and her ſterneſt laws:
Faſhion'd for ſudden feats, or toils of length,
His limbs poſſeſs'd both ſuppleneſs and ſtrength:
Dauntleſs his mind, determin'd and adroit
In every quick and hazardous exploit.

This accompliſhed Chieftain is received with great joy by the aſſembly; and, having ſurpaſſed Lincoza by many degrees in the trial, is inveſted with the ſupreme command. He diſpatches a ſmall party to attack a neighbouring Spaniſh fort: they execute his orders, and make

a vigorous aſſault. After a ſharp conflict they are repulſed; but in the moment of their retreat Caupolican arrives with his army to their ſupport. The Spaniards in deſpair evacuate the fort, and make their eſcape in the night: the news is brought to Valdivia, the Spaniſh Commander in the city of Conception;—and with his reſolution to puniſh the Barbarians the canto concludes.

CANTO III.

O CURELESS malady! Oh fatal peſt!
Embrac'd with ardor and with pride careſt;
Thou common vice, thou moſt contagious ill,
Bane of the mind, and frenzy of the will!
Thou foe to private and to public health;
Thou dropſy of the ſoul, that thirſts for wealth,
Inſatiate Avarice!—'tis from thee we trace
The various miſery of our mortal race.

With this ſpirited and generous invective againſt that prevailing vice of his countrymen, which ſullied the luſtre of their moſt brilliant exploits, Ercilla opens his 3d canto. He does not ſcruple to aſſert, that the enmity of the Indians aroſe from the avaricious ſeverity of their Spaniſh oppreſſors; and he accuſes Valdivia on this head, though he gives him the praiſe of a brave and gallant officer. —— This Spaniard, on the firſt intelligence of the Indian inſurrection, diſpatched his ſcouts from the city where he commanded. They do not return. Preſſed by the impatient gallantry of his troops, Valdivia marches out:—they ſoon diſcover the mangled heads of his meſſengers fixed up as a ſpectacle of terror on the road. Valdivia deliberates what meaſures to purſue. His army entreat him to continue his march. He conſents, being piqued by their inſinuations of his diſgracing the Spaniſh arms. An Indian ally brings him an account that twenty thouſand of the confederated Indians are waiting to deſtroy him in the valley of Tucapel. He ſtill preſſes forward; arrives

rives in ſight of the fort which the Indians had deſtroyed, and engages them in a moſt obſtinate battle; in the deſcription of which, the Poet introduces an original and ſtriking ſimile, in the following manner:

The ſteady pikemen of the ſavage band,
Waiting our haſty charge, in order ſtand;
But when th' advancing Spaniard aim'd his ſtroke,
Their ranks, to form a hollow ſquare, they broke;
An eaſy paſſage to our troop they leave,
And deep within their lines their foes receive;
Their files reſuming then the ground they gave,
Bury the Chriſtians in that cloſing grave.
As the keen Crocodile, who loves to lay
His ſilent ambuſh for his finny prey,
Hearing the ſcaly tribe with ſportive ſound
Advance, and caſt a muddy darkneſs round,
Opens his mighty mouth, with caution, wide,
And, when th' unwary fiſh within it glide,
Cloſing with eager haſte his hollow jaw,
Thus ſatiates with their lives his rav'nous maw:
So, in their toils, without one warning thought,
The murd'rous foe our little ſquadron caught
With quick deſtruction, in a fatal ſtrife,
From whence no Chriſtian ſoldier 'ſcap'd with life.

Such was the fate of the advanced guard of the Spaniards. The Poet then deſcribes the conflict of the main army with great ſpirit:—ten Spaniards diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſignal acts of courage, but are all cut in pieces. The battle proceeds thus:

The hoſtile ſword, now deeply dy'd in blood,
Drench'd the wide field with many a ſanguine flood;
Courage ſtill grows to form the fierce attack,
But waſted vigor makes the combat ſlack:
No pauſe they ſeek, to gain exhauſted breath,
No reſt, except the final reſt of death:

The

The warieſt combatants now only try
To ſnatch the ſweets of vengeance ere they die.
  The fierce diſdain of death, and ſcorn of flight,
Give to our ſcanty troop ſuch wond'rous might,
The Araucanian hoſt begin to yield;
They quit with loſs and ſhame the long-fought field:
They fly; and their purſuers ſhake the plain
With joyous ſhouts of Victory and Spain.
But dire miſchance, and Fate's reſiſtleſs ſway,
Gave a ſtrange iſſue to the dreadful day.
  An Indian Youth, a noble Chieftain's ſon,
Who as our friend his martial feats begun,
Our Leader's Page, by him to battle train'd,
Who now beſide him the hard fight ſuſtain'd,
As he beheld his kindred Chiefs retire,
Felt an indignant flaſh of patriot fire;
And thus incited to a glorious ſtand
The flying champions of his native land:
  Miſguided Country, by vain fear poſſeſt,
Ah whither doſt thou turn thy timid breaſt?
Ye brave compatriots, ſhall your ancient fame
Be vilely buried in this field of ſhame?
Thoſe laws, thoſe rights, ye gloried to defend,
All periſh, all by this ignoble end?
From Chiefs of dreaded power, and honor'd worth,
Ye ſink to abject ſlaves, the ſcorn of earth!
To the pure founders of your boaſted race
Ye give the cureleſs wound of deep diſgrace!
Behold the waſted vigor of your foe!
See, bath'd in ſweat and blood, their courſers blow!
Loſe not your mental force, your martial fires,
Our beſt inheritance from generous ſires;
Sink not the noble Araucanian name,
From glory's ſummit to the depths of ſhame;
Fly, fly the ſervitude your ſouls deteſt!
To the keen ſword oppoſe the dauntleſs breaſt.

Why

Why ſhew ye frames endued with manly power,
Yet ſhrink from danger in the trying hour?
Fix in your minds the friendly truth I ſpeak;
Vain are your fears, your terror blind and weak:
Now make your names immortal; now reſtore
Freedom's loſt bleſſings to your native ſhore:
Now turn, while Fame and Victory invite,
While proſp'rous Fortune calls you to the fight;
Or yet a moment ceaſe, O ceaſe to fly,
And for our country learn of me to die!
As thus he ſpeaks, his eager ſteps advance,
And 'gainſt the Spaniſh Chief he points his lance;
To lead his kindred fugitives from flight,
Singly he dares to tempt th' unequal fight:
Againſt our circling arms, that round him ſhine,
Eager he darts amidſt the thickeſt line,
Keen as, when chaf'd by ſummer's fiery beam,
The young Stag plunges in the cooling ſtream.

The Poet proceeds to relate the great agility and valor diſplayed by Lantaro, for ſuch is the name of this gallant and patriotic Youth: and, as Ercilla has a ſoul ſufficiently heroic to do full juſtice to the virtues of an enemy, he gives him the higheſt praiſe. Having mentioned on the occaſion many heroes of ancient hiſtory, he exclaims:

Say, of theſe famous Chiefs can one exceed
Or match this young Barbarian's noble deed?
Vict'ry for them, her purpoſe unexplor'd,
Tempted by equal chance their happy ſword:
What riſk, what peril did they boldly meet,
Save where Ambition urg'd the ſplendid feat;
Or mightier Int'reſt fir'd the daring mind,
Which makes a Hero of the fearful Hind?
Many there are who with a brave diſdain
Face all the perils of the deathful plain,

Who, fir'd by hopes of glory, nobly dare,
Yet fail the ſtroke of adverſe chance to bear;
With animated fire their ſpirit ſhines,
Till the ſhort ſplendor of their day declines;
But all their valor, all their ſtrength expires,
When fickle Fortune from their ſide retires.
This youthful Hero, when the die was caſt,
War's dire decree againſt his country paſt,
Made the ſtern Power the finiſh'd cauſe reſume,
And finally reverſe the cruel doom:
He, by his efforts in the dread debate,
Forc'd the determin'd will of adverſe Fate,
From ſhouting Triumph ruſh'd the palm to tear,
And fix'd it on the brow of faint Deſpair.

Caupolican, leading his army back to the charge, in conſequence of Lantaro's efforts in their favour, obtains a complete victory. The Spaniards are all ſlain in the field, except their Commander Valdivia, who flies, attended only by a prieſt; but he is ſoon taken priſoner, and conducted before the Indian Chief, who is inclined to ſpare his life; when an elder ſavage, called Leocato, in a ſudden burſt of indignation, kills him with his club.

All the people of Arauco aſſemble in a great plain to celebrate their victory: old and young, women and children, unite in the feſtival; and the trees that ſurround the ſcene of their aſſembly are decorated with the heads and ſpoils of their ſlaughtered enemies.

They meditate the total extermination of the Spaniards from their country, and even a deſcent on Spain. The General makes a prudent ſpeech to reſtrain their impetuoſity; and afterwards, beſtowing juſt applauſe on the brave exploit of the young Lantaro, appoints him his lieutenant. In the midſt of the feſtivity, Caupolican receives advice that a party of fourteen Spaniſh horſemen had attacked ſome of his forces with great havoc. He diſpatches Lantaro to oppoſe them.

CANTO IV.

A PARTY of fourteen gallant Spaniards, who had ſet forth from the city of Imperial to join Valdivia, not being apprized of his unhappy fate, are ſurprized by the enemy where they expected to meet their Commander;—they defend themſelves with great valor. They are informed by a friendly Indian of the fate of Valdivia. They attempt to retreat; but are ſurrounded by numbers of the Araucanians:—when the Poet introduces the following inſtance of Spaniſh heroiſm, which I inſert as a curious ſtroke of their military character:

Here, cried a Spaniard, far unlike his race,
Nor ſhall his abject name my verſe debaſe,
Marking his few aſſociates march along,
O that our band were but a hundred ſtrong!
The brave Gonſalo with diſdain replied:
Rather let two be ſever'd from our ſide,
Kind Heaven! that Memory may our feats proclaim
And call our little troop The Twelve of Fame!

They continue to fight with great bravery againſt ſuperior numbers, when Lautaro arrives with a freſh army againſt them. Still undaunted, they only reſolve to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible. Seven of them are cut to pieces.—In the midſt of the ſlaughter a furious thunder and hail ſtorm ariſes, by which incident the ſurviving ſeven eſcape. The tempeſt is deſcribed with the following original ſimile:

Now in the turbid air a ſtormy cloud
Spreads its terrific ſhadow o'er the crowd;
The gathering darkneſs hides the ſolar ray,
And to th' affrighted earth denies the day;
The ruſhing winds, to which the foreſts yield,
Rive the tall tree, and deſolate the field:

In drops diſtinct and rare now falls the rain;
And now with thickening fury beats the plain.
As the bold maſter of the martial drum,
Ere to the ſhock th' advancing armies come,
In awful notes, that ſhake the heaven's high arch,
Intrepid ſtrikes the ſlow and ſolemn march;
But, when the charging heroes yield their breath,
Doubles the horrid harmony of death:
So the dark tempeſt, with encreaſing ſound,
Pours the loud deluge on the echoing ground.

The few Spaniards that eſcape take refuge in a neighbouring fort; which they abandon the following day on hearing the fate of Valdivia. Lantaro returns, and receives new honors and new forces from his General, to march againſt a Spaniſh army, which departs from the city of Penco under the command of Villagran, an experienced officer, to revenge the death of Valdivia. The departure of the troops from Penco is deſcribed, and the diſtreſs of the women.—Villagran marches with expedition towards the frontiers of Arauco. He arrives at a dangerous paſs, and finds Lantaro, with his army of 10,100 Indians, advantageouſly poſted on the heights, and waiting with great ſteadineſs and diſcipline to give him battle.

CANTO V.

LANTARO with great difficulty reſtrains the eager Indians in their poſt on the rock. He ſuffers a few to deſcend and ſkirmiſh on the lower ground, where ſeveral diſtinguiſh themſelves in ſingle combat. The Spaniards attempt in vain to diſlodge the army of Lantaro by an attack of their cavalry:—they afterwards fire on them from ſix pieces of cannon.

The vext air feels the thunder of the fight,
And ſmoke and flame involve the mountain's height;

Earth

Earth ſeems to open as the flames aſpire,
And new volcano's ſpout deſtructive fire.
  Lantaro ſaw no hopes of life allow'd,
Save by diſperſing this terrific cloud,
That pours its lightning with ſo dire a ſhock,
Smiting his leſſen'd hoſt, who ſtrew the rock;
And to the troop of Leucoton the brave
His quick command the ſkilful Leader gave:
He bids them fiercely to the charge deſcend,
And thus exhorts aloud each ardent friend:
  My faithful partners in bright victory's meed,
Whom fortune ſummons to this noble deed,
Behold the hour when your prevailing might
Shall prove that Juſtice guards us in the fight!
Now firmly fix your lances in the reſt,
And ruſh to honor o'er each hoſtile breaſt;
Through every bar your bloody paſſage force,
Nor let a brother's fall impede your courſe;
Be yon dread inſtruments of death your aim;
Poſſeſt of theſe you gain eternal fame:
The camp ſhall follow your triumphant trace,
And own you leaders in the glorious chace.
  While theſe bold words their ardent zeal exalt,
They ruſh impetuous to the raſh aſſault.

The Indians, undiſmayed by a dreadful ſlaughter, gain poſſeſſion of the cannon.—Villagran makes a ſhort but ſpirited harangue to his flying ſoldiers. He is unable to rally them: and, chuſing rather to die than to ſurvive ſo ignominious a defeat, ruſhes into the thickeſt of the enemy:—when the Poet, leaving his fate uncertain, concludes the canto.

CANTO VI.

THE valiant mind is privileg'd to feel
Superior to each turn of Fortune's wheel;
Chance has no power its value to debaſe,
Or brand it with the mark of deep diſgrace:
So thought the noble Villagran, our Chief,
Who choſe that death ſhould end his preſent grief,
And ſmooth the horrid path, with thorns o'erſpread,
Which Deſtiny condemn'd his feet to tread.

With the preceding encomium on the ſpirit of this unfortunate officer the Poet opens his 6th Canto. Thirteen of the moſt faithful ſoldiers of Villagran, perceiving their Leader fallen motionleſs under the fury of his enemies, make a deſperate effort to preſerve him.—Being placed again on his horſe by theſe generous deliverers, he recovers from the blow which had ſtunned him; and by ſingular exertion, with the aſſiſtance of his ſpirited little troop, effects his eſcape, and rejoins his main army; whom he endeavours in vain to lead back againſt the triumphant Araucanians. The purſuit becomes general, and the Poet deſcribes the horrid maſſacre committed by the Indians on all the unhappy fugitives that fell into their hands.—The Spaniards in their flight are ſtopt by a narrow paſs fortified and guarded by a party of Indians. Villagran forces the rude entrenchment in perſon, and conducts part of his army ſafe through the paſs; but many attempting other roads over the mountainous country, are either loſt among the precipices of the rocks, or purſued and killed by the Indians.

CANTO VII.

THE remains of the Spaniſh army, after infinite loſs and fatigue, at laſt reach the city of Concepcion.

Their entrance in theſe walls let fancy paint,
O'erwhelm'd with anguiſh, and with labor faint:

Theſe

Theſe gaſh'd with ghaſtly wounds, thoſe writh'd with pain,
And ſome their human ſemblance ſcarce retain;
They ſeem unhappy ſpirits 'ſcap'd from hell,
Yet wanting voice their miſery to tell.
Their pangs to all their rolling eyes expreſs,
And ſilence moſt declares their deep diſtreſs.
When wearineſs and ſhame at length allow'd
Their tongues to ſatisfy th' enquiring crowd,
From the pale citizens, amaz'd to hear
A tale ſurpaſſing e'en their wildeſt fear,
One general ſound of lamentation roſe,
That deeply ſolemniz'd a nation's woes;
The neighbouring manſions to their grief reply,
And every wall return'd the mournful cry.

The inhabitants of Concepcion, expecting every inſtant the triumphant Lantaro at their gates, reſolve to abandon their city. A gallant veteran upbraids their cowardly deſign. They diſregard his reproaches, and evacuate the place:—when the Poet introduces the following inſtance of female heroiſm:

'Tis juſt that Fame a noble deed diſplay,
Which claims remembrance, even to the day
When Memory's hand no more the pen ſhall uſe,
But ſink in darkneſs and her being loſe:
The lovely Mencia, an accompliſh'd Dame,
A valiant ſpirit in a tender frame,
Here firmly ſhew'd, as this dread ſcene began,
Courage now found not in the heart of man.
The bed of ſickneſs 'twas her chance to preſs;
But when ſhe heard the city's loud diſtreſs,
Snatching ſuch weapons as the time allow'd,
She ruſh'd indignant midſt the flying crowd.
Now up the neighbouring hill they ſlowly wind,
And, bending oft their mournful eyes behind,

Caſt

Caſt a ſad look, of every hope bereft,
On thoſe rich plains, the precious home they left.
More poignant grief ſee generous Mencia feel,
More noble proof ſhe gives of patriot zeal:
Waving a ſword in her heroic hand,
In their tame march ſhe ſtopt the timid band;
Croſs'd the aſcending road before their van,
And, turning to the city, thus began:
Thou valiant nation, whoſe unequall'd toils
Have dearly purchas'd fame and golden ſpoils,
Where is the courage ye ſo oft diſplay'd
Againſt this foe, from whom ye ſhrink diſmay'd?
Where thoſe high hopes, and that aſpiring flame,
Which made immortal praiſe your conſtant aim?
Where your firm ſouls, that every chance defied,
And native ſtrength, that form'd your noble pride?
Ah whither would you fly, in ſelfiſh fear,
In frantic haſte, with no purſuer near?
How oft has cenſure to your hearts aſſign'd
Ardor too keenly brave and raſhly blind;
Eager to dart amid the doubtful fray,
Scorning the uſeful aid of wiſe delay?
Have we not ſeen you with contempt oppoſe,
And bend beneath your yoke unnumber'd foes;
Attempt and execute deſigns ſo bold,
Ye grew immortal as ye heard them told?
Turn! to your people turn a pitying eye,
To whom your fears theſe happy ſeats deny!
Turn! and ſurvey this fair, this fertile land,
Whoſe ready tribute waits your lordly hand;
Survey its pregnant mines, its ſands of gold;
Survey the flock now wandering from its fold,
Mark how it vainly ſeeks, in wild deſpair,
The faithleſs ſhepherd, who forſakes his care.
E'en the dumb creatures, of domeſtic kind,
Though not endow'd with man's diſcerning mind,

Now ſhew the ſemblance of a reaſoning ſoul,
And in their maſters miſery condole:
The ſtronger animals, of ſterner heart,
Take in this public woe a feeling part;
Their plaintive roar, that ſpeaks their ſenſe aright,
Juſtly upbraids your ignominious flight.
Ye fly from quiet, opulence, and fame,
Purchas'd by valor, your acknowledg'd claim;
From theſe ye fly, to ſeek a foreign ſeat,
Where daſtard fugitives no welcome meet.
How deep the ſhame, an abject life to ſpend
In poor dependance on a pitying friend!
Turn! let the brave their only choice await,
Or honourable life, or inſtant fate.
Return! return! O quit this path of ſhame!
Stain not by fear your yet unſullied name;
Myſelf I offer, if our foes advance,
To ruſh the foremoſt on the hoſtile lance;
My actions then ſhall with my words agree,
And what a woman dares your eyes ſhall ſee.
Return! return! ſhe cried; but cried in vain;
Her fire ſeem'd frenzy to the coward train.

The daſtardly inhabitants of the city, unmoved by this remonſtrance of the noble Donna Mencia de Nidos, continue their precipitate flight, and, after twelve days of confuſion and fatigue, reach the city of Santiago, in the valley of Mapocho. Lantaro arrives in the mean time before the walls they had deſerted:—and the Poet concludes his canto with a ſpirited deſcription of the barbaric fury with which the Indians entered the abandoned city, and deſtroyed by fire the rich and magnificent manſions of their Spaniſh oppreſſors.

CANTO

CANTO VIII.

LANTARO is recalled from his victorious exploits, to aſſiſt at a general aſſembly of the Indians, in the valley of Arauco. The different Chieftains deliver their various ſentiments concerning the war, after their Leader Caupolican has declared his deſign to purſue the Spaniards with unceaſing vengeance. The veteran Colocolo propoſes a plan for their military operations. An ancient Augur, named Puchecalco, denounces ruin on all the projects of his countrymen, in the name of the Indian Dæmon Eponamon. He recites the omens of their deſtruction. The fierce Tucapel, provoked to frenzy by this gloomy prophet, ſtrikes him dead in the midſt of his harangue, by a ſudden blow of his mace. Caupolican orders the murderous Chieftain to be led to inſtant death. He defends himſelf with ſucceſs againſt numbers who attempt to ſeize him. Lantaro, pleaſed by this exertion of his wonderful force and valour, intreats the General to forgive what had paſſed; and, at his interceſſion, Tucapel is received into favour. Lantaro then cloſes the buſineſs of the aſſembly, by recommending the plan propoſed by Colocolo, and intreating that he may himſelf be entruſted with a detached party of five hundred Indians, with which he engages to reduce the city of Santiago. His propoſal is accepted. The Chieftains, having finiſhed their debate, declare their reſolutions to their people; and, after their uſual feſtivity, Caupolican, with the main army, proceeds to attack the city of Imperial.

CANTO IX.

THE Poet opens this Canto with an apology for a miracle, which he thinks it neceſſary to relate, as it was atteſted by the whole Indian army; and, though it does not afford him any very uncommon or ſublime

lime imagery, he embelliſhes the wonder he deſcribes, by his eaſy and ſpirited verſification, of which the following lines are an imperfect copy:

When to the city's weak defenceleſs wall
Its foes were ruſhing, at their trumpet's call,
The air grew troubled with portentous ſound,
And mournful omens multiplied around;
With furious ſhock the elements engage,
And all the winds contend in all their rage.
From claſhing clouds their mingled torrents guſh,
And rain and hail with rival fury ruſh.
Bolts of loud thunder, floods of lightning rend
The opening ſkies, and into earth deſcend.
O'er the vaſt army equal terrors ſpread;
No mind eſcapes the univerſal dread;
No breaſt, tho' arm'd with adamantine power,
Holds its firm vigor in this horrid hour;
For now the fierce Eponamon appears,
And in a Dragon's form augments their fears;
Involving flames around the Dæmon ſwell,
Who ſpeaks his mandate in a hideous yell:
He bids his votaries with haſte inveſt
The trembling city, by deſpair depreſt.
Where'er th' invading ſquadrons force their way,
He promiſes their arms an eaſy prey.
Spare not (he cry'd) in the relentleſs ſtrife,
One Spaniſh battlement, one Chriſtian life!
He ſpoke, and, while the hoſt his will adore,
Melts into vapour, and is ſeen no more.
Quick as he vaniſh'd Nature's ſtruggles ceaſe;
The troubled elements are ſooth'd to peace:
The winds no longer rage with boundleſs ire,
But, huſh'd in ſilence, to their caves retire:
The clouds diſperſe, reſtoring as they fly
The unobſtructed ſun and azure ſky:

Fear only held its place, and ſtill poſſeſt
Uſurp'd dominion o'er the boldeſt breaſt.
The tempeſt ceas'd, and heaven, ſerenely bright,
Array'd the moiſten'd earth in joyous light:
When, pois'd upon a cloud that ſwiftly flew,
A Female form deſcended to their view,
Clad in the radiance of ſo rich a veil,
As made the ſun's meridian luſtre pale;
For it outſhone his golden orb as far
As his full blaze outſhines the twinkling ſtar.
Her ſacred features baniſh all their dread,
And o'er the hoſt reviving comfort ſhed.
An hoary Elder by her ſide appear'd,
For age and ſanctity of life rever'd;
And thus ſhe ſpoke, with ſoft perſuaſive grace:
Ah! whither ruſh ye, blind devoted race?
Turn, while you can, towards your native plain,
Nor 'gainſt yon city point your arms in vain;
For God will guard his faithful Chriſtian band,
And give them empire o'er your bleeding land,
Since, thankleſs, falſe, and obſtinate in ill,
You ſcorn ſubmiſſion to his ſacred will.
Yet ſhun thoſe walls; th' Almighty, there ador'd,
There arms his people with Deſtruction's ſword.
So ſpoke the Viſion, with an angel's tongue,
And thro' the ſpacious air to heaven ſhe ſprung.

The Indians, confounded by this miraculous interpoſition, diſperſe in diſorder to their ſeveral homes; and the Poet proceeds very gravely to affirm, that, having obtained the beſt information, from many individuals, concerning this miracle, that he might be very exact in his account of it, he finds it happened on the twenty-third of April, four years before he wrote the verſes that deſcribe it, and in the year of our Lord 1554. The Viſion was followed by peſtilence and famine among the Indians. They remain inactive during the winter, but aſſemble again the enſuing ſpring in the plains of Arauco, to renew the war.

They

They receive intelligence that the Spaniards are attempting to rebuild the city of Concepcion, and are requeſted by the neighbouring tribes to march to their aſſiſtance, and prevent that deſign. Lantaro leads a choſen band on that expedition, hoping to ſurprize the fort the Spaniards had erected on the ruins of their city; but the Spaniſh commander, Alvarado, being apprized of their motion, ſallies forth to meet the Indian party: a ſkirmiſh enſues; the Spaniards retire to their fort; Lantaro attempts to ſtorm it; a moſt bloody encounter enſues; Tucapel ſignalizes himſelf in the attack; the Indians perſevere with the moſt obſtinate valour, and, after a long conflict (deſcribed with a conſiderable portion of Homeric ſpirit) gain poſſeſſion of the fort; Alvarado and a few of his followers eſcape; they are purſued, and much galled in their flight: a ſingle Indian, named Rengo, harraſſes Alvarado and two of his attendants; the Spaniſh officer, provoked by the inſult, turns with his two companions to puniſh their purſuer; but the wily Indian ſecures himſelf on ſome rocky heights, and annoys them with his ſling, till, deſpairing of revenge, they continue their flight.

CANTO X.

THE Indians celebrate their victory with public games; and prizes are appointed for ſuch as excel in their various martial exerciſes. Leucoton is declared victor in the conteſt of throwing the lance, and receives a ſcimitar as his reward. Rengo ſubdues his two rivals, Cayeguan and Talco, in the exerciſe of wreſtling, and proceeds to contend with Leucoton. After a long and ſevere ſtruggle, Rengo has the misfortune to fall by an accidental failure of the ground, but, ſpringing lightly up, engages his adverſary with increaſing fury; and the canto ends without deciding the conteſt.

CANTO XI.

LANTARO ſeparates the two enraged antagoniſts, to prevent the ill effects of their wrath. The youth Orompello, whom Leucoton had before ſurpaſſed in the conteſt of the lance, challenges his ſucceſsful rival to wreſtle: they engage, and fall together: the victory is diſputed. Tucapel demands the prize for his young friend Orompello, and inſults the General Caupolican. The latter is reſtrained from avenging the inſult, by the ſage advice of the veteran Colocolo, at whoſe requeſt he diſtributes prizes of equal value to each of the claimants. To prevent farther animoſities, they relinquiſh the reſt of the appointed games, and enter into debate on the war. Lantaro is again appointed to the command of a choſen troop, and marches towards the city of St. Jago. The Spaniards, alarmed at the report of his approach, ſend out ſome forces to reconnoitre his party: a ſkirmiſh enſues: they are driven back to the city, and relate that Lantaro is fortifying a ſtrong poſt at ſome diſtance, intending ſoon to attack the city. Villagran, the Spaniard who commanded there, being confined by illneſs, appoints an officer of his own name to ſally forth, with all the forces he can raiſe, in queſt of the enemy. The Spaniards fix their camp, on the approach of night, near the fort of Lantaro: they are ſuddenly alarmed, and ſummoned to arms; but the alarm is occaſioned only by a ſingle horſe without a rider, which Lantaro, aware of their approach, had turned looſe towards their camp, as an inſulting mode of proclaiming his late victory, in which he had taken ten of the Spaniſh horſes.

The Spaniards paſs the night under arms, reſolving to attack the Indians at break of day. Lantaro had iſſued orders that no Indian ſhould ſally from the fort under pain of death, to prevent the advantage which the Spaniſh cavalry muſt have over his ſmall forces in the open plain. He alſo commanded his ſoldiers to retreat with an appearance of diſmay, at the firſt attack on the fort, and ſuffer a conſiderable number of the enemy to enter the place. This ſtratagem ſucceeds: the Spaniards ruſh forward with great fury: the Indians give ground, but,

ſoon turning with redoubled violence on thoſe who had paſſed their lines, deſtroy many, and oblige the reſt to ſave themſelves by a precipitate flight. The Indians, forgetting the orders of their Leader, in the ardour of vengeance ſally forth in purſuit of their flying enemy. Lantaro recalls them by the ſound of a military horn, which he blows with the utmoſt violence. They return, but dare not appear in the preſence of their offended Commander. He iſſues new reſtrictions; and then, ſummoning his ſoldiers together, addreſſes them, in a ſpirited, yet calm and affectionate harangue, on the neceſſity of martial obedience. While he is yet ſpeaking, the Spaniards return to the attack, but are again repulſed with great loſs. They retreat, and encamp at the foot of a mountain, unmoleſted by any purſuers.

CANTO XII.

THE Spaniards remain in their camp, while two of their adventurous ſoldiers engage to return once more to the fort, and examine the ſtate of it. On their approach, one of them, called Marcos Vaez, is ſaluted by his name, and promiſed ſecurity, by a voice from within the walls. Lantaro had formerly lived with him on terms of friendſhip, and now invites him into the fort. The Indian Chief harangues on the reſolution and the power of his countrymen to exterminate the Spaniards, unleſs they ſubmit. He propoſes, however, terms of accommodation to his old friend Marcos, and ſpecifies the tribute he ſhould expect. The Spaniard anſwers with diſdain, that the only tribute the Indians would receive from his countrymen would be torture and death. Lantaro replies, with great temper, that arms, and the valour of the reſpective nations, muſt determine this point; and proceeds to entertain his gueſt with a diſplay of ſix Indians, whom he had mounted and trained to exerciſe on Spaniſh horſes. The Spaniard challenges the whole party: Lantaro will not allow him to engage in any conflict, but diſmiſſes him in peace. He recalls him, before he had proceeded far from the fort, and, telling him that his ſoldiers were much diſtreſſed by the want of proviſion, entreats him to ſend a ſupply, affirming it to be true

heroiſm

heroiſm to relieve an enemy from the neceſſities of famine. The Spaniard ſubſcribes to the ſentiment, and engages, if poſſible, to comply with the requeſt. Returning to his camp, he acquaints his Commander Villagran with all that had paſſed; who, ſuſpecting ſome dangerous deſign from Lantaro, decamps haſtily in the night to regain the city. The Indian Chief is ſeverely mortified by their departure, as he had formed a project for cutting off their retreat, by letting large currents of water into the marſhy ground on which the Spaniards were encamped. Deſpairing of being able to ſucceed againſt their city, now prepared to reſiſt him, he returns towards Arauco, moſt ſorely galled by his diſappointment, and thus venting his anguiſh:

What can redeem Lantaro's wounded name?
What plea preſerve his failing arms from ſhame?
Did not my ardent ſoul this taſk demand,
Which now upbraids my unperforming hand?
On me, on me alone can cenſure fall;
Myſelf th' adviſer and the guide of all.
Am I the Chief who, in Fame's bright career,
Aſk'd to ſubdue the globe a ſingle year?
While, at the head of this my glittering train,
I weakly threaten Spaniſh walls in vain,
Thrice has pale Cynthia, with repleniſh'd ray,
Seen my ill-order'd troop in looſe array;
And the rich chariot of the blazing ſun
Has from the Scorpion to Aquarius run.
At laſt, as fugitives theſe paths we tread,
And mourn twice fifty brave companions dead.
Could Fate's kind hand this hateful ſtain efface,
Could death redeem me from this worſe diſgrace,
My uſeleſs ſpear ſhould pierce this abject heart,
Which has ſo ill ſuſtain'd a ſoldier's part.
Unworthy thought! the mean ignoble blow
Would only tempt my proud and vaunting foe
To boaſt that I preferr'd, in fear's alarm,
My own weak weapon to his ſtronger arm.

By

By Hell I ſwear, who rules the ſanguine ſtrife,
If Chance allow me yet a year of life,
I'll chaſe theſe foreign lords from Chile's ſtrand,
And Spaniſh blood ſhall ſaturate our land.
No changing ſeaſon, neither cold nor heat,
Shall make the firmer ſtep of War retreat;
Nor ſhall the earth, nor hell's expanding cave,
From this avenging arm one Spaniard ſave.
Now the brave Chief, with ſolemn ardor, ſwore
To his dear native home to turn no more;
From no fierce ſun, no ſtormy winds to fly,
But patiently abide the varying ſky,
And ſpurn all thoughts of pleaſure and of eaſe,
Till reſcu'd fame his tortur'd ſoul appeaſe;
Till earth confeſs the brave Lantaro's hand
Has clos'd the glorious work his ſpirit plann'd.
In theſe reſolves the Hero found relief,
And thus relax'd the o'erſtrain'd cord of grief;
Whoſe preſſure gall'd him with ſuch mental pain,
That frenzy almoſt ſeiz'd his burning brain.

Lantaro continues his march into an Indian diſtrict, from which he collects a ſmall increaſe of force; and, after addreſſing his ſoldiers concerning the expediency of ſtrict military diſcipline, and the cauſe of their late ill ſucceſs, he turns again towards the city of St. Jago; but, receiving intelligence on his road of its preparations for defence, he again ſuſpends his deſign, and fortifies a poſt, which he chuſes with the hope of collecting ſtill greater numbers to aſſiſt him in his projected enterprize. The Spaniards at St. Jago are eager to ſally in queſt of Lantaro, but their Commander Villagran was abſent on an expedition to the city of Imperial. In returning from thence he paſſes near the poſt of Lantaro. An Indian ally acquaints him with its ſituation, and, at the earneſt requeſt of the Spaniſh officer, agrees to conduct him, by a ſhort though difficult road, over a mountain, to attack the fort by ſurprize. The Poet ſuſpends his narration of this intereſting event, to relate the arrival of new forces from Spain in America; and he now begins

gins to appear himſelf on the field of action. "Hitherto," ſays he, "I have deſcribed the ſcenes in which I was not preſent; yet I have collected my information from no partial witneſſes, and I have recorded only thoſe events in which both parties agree. Since it is known that I have ſhed ſo much blood in ſupport of what I affirm, my future narration will be more authentic; for I now ſpeak as an ocular witneſs of every action, unblinded by partiality, which I diſdain, and reſolved to rob no one of the praiſe which he deſerves."

After pleading his youth as an apology for the defects of his ſtyle, and after declaring that his only motive for writing was the ardent deſire to preſerve ſo many valiant actions from periſhing in oblivion, the Poet proceeds to relate the arrival of the Marquis de Canete as Viceroy in Peru, and the ſpirited manner in which he corrected the abuſes of that country. The canto concludes with reflections on the advantages of loyalty, and the miſeries of rebellion.

CANTO XIII.

SPANISH deputies from the province of Chile implore aſſiſtance from the new Viceroy of Peru: he ſends them a conſiderable ſuccour, under the conduct of Don Garcia, his ſon. The Poet is himſelf of this band, and relates the ſplendid preparations for the enterprize, and the embarkation of the troops in ten veſſels, which ſail from Lima towards the coaſt of Chile. Having deſcribed part of this voyage, he returns to the bold exploit of Villagran, and the adventures of Lantaro, the moſt intereſting of all the Araucanian Heroes, whom he left ſecuring himſelf in his ſequeſtered fort.

A path where watchful centinels were ſpread,
A ſingle path, to this lone ſtation led:
No other ſigns of human ſtep were trac'd;
For the vex'd land was deſolate and waſte.
It chanc'd that night the noble Chieftain preſt
His anxious miſtreſs to his gallant breaſt,

The

The fair Guacolda, for whoſe charms he burn'd,
And whoſe warm heart his faithful love return'd.
That night beheld the warlike ſavage reſt,
Free from th' incumbrance of his martial veſt;
That night alone allow'd his eyes to cloſe
In the deceitful calm of ſhort repoſe:
Sleep preſt upon him like the weight of death;
But ſoon he ſtarts, alarm'd, and gaſps for breath.
The fair Guacolda, with a trembling tongue,
Anxious enquires from whence his anguiſh ſprung.
My lovely Fair! the brave Lantaro cries,
An hideous viſion ſtruck my ſcornful eyes:
Methought that inſtant a fierce Chief of Spain
Mock'd my vain ſpear with inſolent diſdain;
His forceful arm my failing powers o'ercame,
And ſtrength and motion ſeem'd to quit my frame.
But ſtill the vigor of my ſoul I keep,
And its keen anger burſt the bonds of ſleep.
With quick deſpair, the troubled Fair one ſaid,
Alas! thy dreams confirm the ills I dread.
'Tis come—the object of my boding fears!
Thy end, the ſource of my unceaſing tears.
Yet not ſo wretched is this mournful hour,
Nor o'er me, Fortune, canſt thou boaſt ſuch power,
But that kind death may ſhorten all my woes,
And give the agonizing ſcene to cloſe.
Let my ſtern fate its cruel rage employ,
And hurl me from the throne of love and joy;
Whatever pangs its malice may deviſe,
It cannot rend affection's ſtronger ties.
Tho' horrible the blow my fears foreſee,
A ſecond blow will ſet my ſpirit free;
For cold on earth thy frame ſhall ne'er be found,
While mine with uſeleſs being loads the ground.
The Chief, tranſported with her tender charms,
Cloſely around her neck entwin'd his arms;

And, while fond tears her ſnowy breaſt bedew'd,
Thus with redoubled love his ſpeech purſu'd:
My generous Fair, thy gloomy thoughts diſmiſs;
Nor let dark omens interrupt our bliſs,
And cloud theſe moments that with tranſport ſhine,
While my exulting heart thus feels thee mine.
Thy troubled fancy prompts my mutual ſigh;
Not that I think the hour of danger nigh:
But Love ſo melts me with his ſoft controul,
Impoſſibilities alarm my ſoul.
If thy kind wiſhes bid Lantaro live,
Who to this frame the wound of death can give?
Tho' 'gainſt me all the powers of earth combine,
My life is ſubject to no hand but thine.
Who has reſtor'd the Araucanian name,
And rais'd it, ſinking in the depths of ſhame,
When alien lords our nation's ſpirit broke,
And bent its neck beneath a ſervile yoke?
I am the Chief who burſt our galling chain,
And freed my country from oppreſſive Spain;
My name alone, without my ſword's diſplay,
Humbles our foes, and fills them with diſmay.
Theſe happy arms while thy dear beauties fill,
I feel no terror, I foreſee no ill.
Be not by falſe and empty dreams depreſt,
Since truth has nothing to afflict thy breaſt.
Oft have I 'ſcap'd, inur'd to every ſtate,
From many a darker precipice of fate;
Oft in far mightier perils riſk'd my life,
And iſſued glorious from the doubtful ſtrife.
With leſſ'ning confidence, and deeper grief,
Trembling ſhe hung upon the ſoothing Chief,
His lip with ſupplicating ſoftneſs preſt,
And urg'd with many a tear this fond requeſt:
If the pure love, which, prodigal and free,
When freedom moſt was mine, I gave to thee;

If

If truth, which Heaven will witneſs and defend,
Weigh with my ſovereign lord and gentle friend;
By theſe let me adjure thee; by the pain
Which at our parting pierc'd my every vein,
And all the vows, if undiſpers'd in air,
Which then with many a tear I heard thee ſwear;
To this my only wiſh at leaſt agree,
If all thy wiſhes have been laws to me:
Haſte, I entreat thee, arm thyſelf with care,
And bid thy ſoldiers for defence prepare.
The brave Barbarian quick reply'd—'Tis clear
How low my powers are rated by thy fear.
Canſt thou ſo poorly of Lantaro deem?
And is this arm ſo ſunk in thy eſteem?
This arm, which, reſcuing thy native earth,
So prodigally prov'd its valiant worth!
In my try'd courage how complete thy truſt,
Whoſe terror weeps thy living lord as duſt!
In thee, ſhe cries, with confidence moſt pure,
My ſoul is ſatisfy'd, yet not ſecure.
What will thy arm avail in danger's courſe,
If my malignant fate has mightier force?
But let the mis'ry I forebode ariſe;
On this firm thought my conſtant love relies:
The ſword whoſe ſtroke our union may disjoin,
Will teach my faithful ſoul to follow thine.
Since my hard deſtiny, with rage ſevere,
Thus threatens me with all that love can fear;
Since I am doom'd the worſt of ills to ſee,
And loſe all earthly good in loſing thee;
O! ſuffer me to paſs, ere death appears,
The little remnant of my life in tears!
The heart that ſinks not in diſtreſs like this,
Could never feel, could never merit bliſs.
Here from her eyes ſuch floods of ſorrow flow,
Compaſſion weeps in gazing on her woe!

The fond Lantaro, tho' of firmeſt power,
Sheds, as ſhe ſpeaks, a ſympathetic ſhower.
But, to the tender ſcenes of love unus'd,
My artleſs pen, embarraſs'd and confus'd,
From its ſad taſk with diffidence withdraws,
And in its labour aſks a little pauſe.

CANTO XIV.

WHAT erring wretch, to Truth and Beauty blind,
Shall dare to ſatirize the Female kind,
Since pure affection prompts their anxious care,
Their lovely weakneſs, and their fond deſpair?
This fair Barbarian, free from Chriſtian ties,
A noble proof of perfect love ſupplies,
By kindeſt words, and floods of tears that roll
From the clear ſource of her impaſſion'd ſoul.
The chearing ardor of the dauntleſs Chief
Fails to afford her troubled mind relief;
Nor can the ample trench and guarded wall
Preſerve her doubtful heart from fear's enthrall:
Her terrors, ruſhing with love's mighty force,
Level whatever would impede their courſe.
She finds no ſhelter from her cruel doom,
Save the dear refuge of Lantaro's tomb.
Thus their two hearts, where equal paſſion reign'd,
A fond debate with tender ſtriſe maintain'd;
Their differing words alike their love diſplay,
Feed the ſweet poiſon, and augment its ſway.
The ſleepy ſoldiers now their ſtories cloſe,
And ſtretch'd around their ſinking fires repoſe.
The path in front with centinels was lin'd,
And the high mountain was their guard behind;

But o'er that mountain, with advent'rous tread,
Bold Villagran his ſilent forces led.
His haſty march with painful toil he made;
Toil is the price that muſt for fame be paid.
Now near the fort, and halting in its ſight,
He waits the coming aid of clearer light.
The ſtars yet ſhining, but their fires decay,
And now the reddening eaſt proclaims the day.
Th' advancing troop no Indian eye alarms,
For friendly darkneſs hover'd o'er their arms;
And on the quarter where the mountain roſe,
The careleſs guard deſpis'd the thought of foes.
No panting horſe their ſtill approach betray'd;
Propitious Fortune lent the Spaniards aid;
Fortune, who oft bids drowſy Sloth beware,
And lulls to ſleep the watchful eye of Care.
When Night's obſcure dominion firſt declines,
And glimmering light the duſky air refines,
The weary guards, who round the wall were plac'd,
Hail the new day, and from their ſtation haſte;
Secure of ill, no longer watch they keep,
Quick to forget their nightly toils in ſleep:
Thro' all the fort there reign'd a calm profound;
In wine and ſlumber all its force was drown'd.
The Spaniſh Chief, who ſaw the fav'ring hour,
Led on by ſlow degrees his ſilent power.
No Indian eyes perceiv'd his near advance;
Fate ſeem'd to bind them in a cruel trance;
Each in ſound ſlumber draws his eaſy breath,
Nor feels his ſlumber will be clos'd by Death.
So blind are mortals to that tyrant's ſway,
They deem him diſtant, while they ſink his prey.
Our eager ſoldiers now no longer halt,
While kind occaſion prompts the keen aſſault;
A ſhout they raiſe, terrific, loud, and long,
Swell'd by the voice of all the ardent throng;

Whoſe ranks, obedient to their Leader's call,
Ruſh with light ardor o'er th' unguarded wall,
And gain the fort, where Sleep's oppreſſive weight
Expos'd his wretched victims, blind to fate.
As villains, conſcious of their life impure,
Find in their guilty courſe no ſpot ſecure;
For vice is ever doom'd new fears to feel,
And tremble at each turn of Fortune's wheel;
At every noiſe, at each alarm that ſtirs,
Death's penal horror to their mind occurs;
Quick to their arms they fly with wild diſmay,
And ruſh where haſty terror points the way:
So quick the Indians to the tumult came,
With ſleep and valour ſtruggling in their frame.
Unaw'd by danger's unexpected ſight,
They rouſe their fellows, and they ruſh to fight.
Tho' their brave boſoms are of armour bare,
Their manly hearts their martial rage declare.
No furious odds their gallant ſouls appall,
But reſolute they fly to guard the wall.
It was the ſeaſon when, with tender care,
Lantaro reaſon'd with his anxious Fair;
Careſt, conſol'd, and, in his anger kind,
Mildly reprov'd her weak miſtruſting mind.
Spite of his chearing voice ſhe trembles ſtill;
Severer terrors now her boſom fill:
For ſterner ſounds their ſoft debate o'ercome,
Drown'd in the rattle of th' alarming drum.
But not ſo quick, on Apprehenſion's wings,
The wretched miſer from his pillow ſprings,
Whoſe hoarded gold forbids his mind to reſt,
If doubtful noiſe the nightly thief ſuggeſt:
Nor yet ſo haſty, tho' with terror wild,
Flies the fond mother to her wounded child,
Whoſe painful cry her ſhuddering ſoul alarms,
As flew Lantaro at the ſound of arms.

His mantle rapidly around him roll'd,
And, graſping a light ſword with haſty hold,
Too eager for his heavier arms to wait,
The fierce Barbarian hurried to the gate.
O faithleſs Fortune! thou deceitful friend!
Of thy falſe favours how ſevere the end!
How quick thou cancell'ſt, when thy frown appears,
Th' accumulated gifts of long triumphant years!
To aid the Spaniards in their bold emprize,
Four hundred Indians march'd, their firm allies,
Who on the left their line of battle cloſe,
And haſte to combat with their painted bows;
Launching adroitly, in their rapid courſe,
Unnumber'd arrows with unerring force.
As brave Lantaro iſſued from his tent,
A ſhaft to meet the ſallying Chief was ſent;
Thro' his left ſide (ye valiant, mourn his lot!)
Flew the keen arrow, with ſuch fury ſhot
It pierc'd his heart, the braveſt and the beſt
That e'er was lodg'd within a human breaſt.
Proud of the ſtroke that laid ſuch valor low,
Death ſeem'd to glory in th' important blow;
And, that no Mortal might his triumph claim,
In darkneſs hid the doubtful Archer's name.
Such force the keen reſiſtleſs weapon found,
It ſtretch'd the mighty Chieftain on the ground,
And gave large outlet to his ardent blood,
That guſh'd apace in a tumultuous flood.
From his ſunk cheek its native colour fled;
His ſightleſs eyes roll'd in his ghaſtly head;
His ſoul, that felt its glorious hopes o'erthrown,
Retir'd, indignant, to the world unknown.

The noble ſavages, not diſmayed by the death of their Leader, continue to defend the fort with great fury.

CANTO

CANTO XV.

THE Poet opens this canto with a lively panegyric on Love: he affirms that the greateſt Poets have derived their glory from their vivid deſcriptions of this enchanting paſſion; and he laments that he is precluded by his ſubject from indulging his imagination in ſuch ſcenes as are more likely to captivate a reader.

He ſeems to intend this as an apology (but I muſt own it is an unſatisfactory one,) for deſerting the fair Guacolda, whom he mentions no more. He proceeds to deſcribe the ſharp conteſt which the undaunted Indians ſtill maintained in their fort:—they refuſe quarter, which is offered them by the Spaniſh Leader, and all reſolutely periſh with the brave and beloved Lantaro. The Poet then reſumes his account of the naval expedition from Peru to Chile; and concludes the canto with a ſpirited deſcription of a ſtorm, which attacked the veſſels as they arrived in ſight of the province to which they were ſteering.

CANTO XVI.

THE ſtorm abates. The Spaniards land, and fortify themſelves on an iſland near the country of the Araucanians. The latter hold a council of war in the valley of Ongolmo. Caupolican, their General, propoſes to attack the Spaniards in their new poſt. The elder Chieftains diſſuade him from the deſign. A quarrel enſues between Tucapel and the aged Peteguelen:—they are appeaſed by a ſpeech of the venerable Colocolo; by whoſe advice a ſpirited and adroit young Indian, named Millalanco, is diſpatched, as a peaceful ambaſſador, to learn the ſituation and deſigns of the Spaniards. He embarks in a large galley with oars, and ſoon arrives at the iſland. He ſurveys the Spaniſh implements of war with aſtoniſhment, and is conducted to the tent of the General, Don Garcia.

CANTO

CANTO XVII.

THE Indian addreſſes the Spaniſh officers with a propoſal of peace and amity. He is diſmiſſed with preſents. The Chieftains, on his return, pretend to relinquiſh hoſtilities; but prepare ſecretly for war. The Spaniards remain unmoleſted on the iſland during the ſtormy ſeaſon. They ſend a ſelect party of a hundred and thirty, including our Poet, to raiſe a fort on the continent: theſe execute their commiſſion with infinite diſpatch, and all the Spaniſh troops remove to this new poſt. The Araucanians are alarmed. An intrepid Youth, named Gracolano, propoſes to the Indian General, Caupolican, to ſtorm the fort. The Indians advance near it, under ſhelter of the night. The Poet deſcribes himſelf, at this juncture, as oppreſſed by the exceſſive labours of the day, and unable to purſue his poetical ſtudies according to his nightly cuſtom: the pen falls from his hand: he is ſeized with violent pains and tremblings: his ſtrength and ſenſes forſake him: but ſoon recovering from this infirmity, he enjoys a refreſhing ſleep. Bellona appears to him in a viſion, and encourages him both as a ſoldier and a poet. She conducts him, through a delicious country, to the ſummit of a moſt lofty mountain; when, pointing to a ſpot below, ſhe informs him it is St. Quintin, and that his countrymen, under the command of their ſovereign Philip, are juſt marching to attack it: ſhe adds, that her preſence is neceſſary in the midſt of that important ſcene; and leaves the Poet on the eminence to ſurvey and record the battle.

CANTO XVIII.

AFTER the Poet has deſcribed the ſucceſs of his royal maſter at St. Quintin, a female figure of a moſt venerable appearance, but without a name, relates to him prophetically many future events of great importance to his country. She touches on the diſturbances in the

Netherlands, the enterprizes of the Turks, and the exploits of Don John of Auſtria, at that time unknown to fame. Theſe ſhe hints very imperfectly, telling the Poet, that if he wiſhes for farther information, he muſt follow the ſteps of a tame deer, which he will find in a particular ſpot; this animal will lead him to the cell of an ancient hermit, formerly a ſoldier, who will conduct him to the ſecret cave of the unſocial Fiton, a mighty magician, who will diſplay to him the moſt miraculous viſions. His female Inſtructor then adviſes him to mix ſofter ſubjects with the horrors of war, and to turn his eyes and his thoughts to the charms of the many Beauties who then flouriſhed in Spain. He beholds all theſe lovely fair ones aſſembled in a delicious paradiſe; and he is particularly attracted by a young lady, whoſe name he diſcovers to be Donna Maria Bazan (his future wife): in the moment that he begins to queſtion his Guide concerning this engaging Beauty, he is rouſed from his viſion by the ſound of an alarm. He ſnatches up his arms, and hurries to his poſt:—while the morning dawns, and the Indians begin to attack the fort.

CANTO XIX.

THE Indians advance in three ſquadrons. The Youth Gracolano o'erleaps the trench, ſupported on a lofty pike, by which he alſo paſſes the wall. He defends himſelf in the midſt of the Spaniards with great ſpirit; but, finding himſelf unſupported, he wrenches a lance from a Spaniſh ſoldier, and tries to leap once more over the trench; but he is ſtruck by a ſtone while vaulting through the air, and falls, covered, as the Poet expreſsly declares, with two-and-thirty wounds. Some of his friends are ſhot near him; but the Indians get poſſeſſion of the Spaniſh lance with which he had ſprung over the wall, and brandiſh it in triumph. The Spaniard, named Elvira, who had loſt his weapon, piqued by the adventure, ſallies from the fort, and returns, amid the ſhouts of his countrymen, with an Indian ſpear which he won in ſingle combat from a Barbarian, whom he had perceived detached from his

party. The Indians attempt to ſtorm the fort on every ſide: many are deſtroyed by the Spaniſh fire-arms. The head of the ancient Peteguelen is ſhot off; but Tucapel paſſes the wall, and ruſhes with great ſlaughter into the midſt of the enemy. The Spaniards who were in the ſhips that anchored near the coaſt haſten on ſhore, and march to aſſiſt their countrymen in the fort, but are attacked by a party of Indians in their march. The conflict continues furious on the walls; but the Indians at length retreat, leaving Tucapel ſtill fighting within the fort.

CANTO XX.

TUCAPEL, though ſeverely wounded, eſcapes with life, and rejoins the Indian army, which continues to retreat. The Spaniards ſally from the fort, but ſoon return to it, from the apprehenſion of an ambuſcade. They clear their trench, and ſtrengthen the weaker parts of their fortification. Night comes on. The Poet deſcribes himſelf ſtationed on a little eminence in the plain below the fort, which was ſeated on high and rocky ground:—fatigued with the toils of the day, and oppreſſed by the weight of his armour, which he continues to wear, he is troubled with a lethargic heavineſs; which he counteracts by exerciſe, declaring that his diſpoſition to ſlumber in his poſt aroſe not from any intemperance either in diet or in wine, as mouldy biſcuit and rain-water had been for ſome time his chief ſuſtenance; and that he was accuſtomed to make the moiſt earth his bed, and to divide his time between his poetical and his military labours. He then relates the following nocturnal adventure, which may perhaps be conſidered as the moſt ſtriking and pathetic incident in this ſingular poem:

While thus I ſtrove my nightly watch to keep,
And ſtruggled with th' oppreſſive weight of ſleep,
As my quick feet, with many a ſilent ſtride,
Travers'd th' allotted ground from ſide to ſide,
My eye perceiv'd one quarter of the plain
White with the mingled bodies of the ſlain;

For our inceſſant fire, that bloody day,
Had ſlaughter'd numbers in the ſtubborn fray.
As oft I paus'd each diſtant noiſe to hear,
Gazing around me with attentive ear,
I heard from time to time a feeble ſound
Towards the breathleſs Indians on the ground,
Still cloſing with a ſigh of mournful length;
At every interval it gather'd ſtrength;
And now it ceas'd, and now again begun,
And ſtill from corſe to corſe it ſeem'd to run.
As night's encreaſing ſhade my hope deſtroys,
To view the ſource of this uncertain noiſe,
Eager my mind's unquiet doubts to ſtill,
And more the duties of my poſt fulfil,
With crouching ſteps I haſte, and earneſt eyes,
To the low ſpot from whence the murmurs riſe;
And ſee a duſky Form, that ſeems to tread
Slow, on four feet, among the gory dead.
With terror, that my heart will not deny,
When this ſtrange viſion ſtruck my doubtful eye,
Towards it, with a prayer to Heav'n, I preſt,
Arms in my hand, my corſelet on my breaſt;
But now the duſky Form, on which I ſprung,
Upright aroſe, and ſpoke with plaintive tongue:
Mercy! to mercy hear my juſt pretence;
I am a woman, guiltleſs of offence!
If my diſtreſs, and unexampled plight,
No generous pity in thy breaſt excite;
If thy blood-thirſty rage, by tears uncheck'd,
Would paſs thoſe limits which the brave reſpect;
Will ſuch a deed encreaſe thy martial fame,
When Heaven's juſt voice ſhall to the world proclaim,
That by thy ruthleſs ſword a woman died,
A widow, ſunk in ſorrow's deepeſt tide?
Yet I implore thee, if 'twas haply thine,
Or for thy curſe, as now I feel it mine;

If

If e'er thy lot, in any ſtate, to prove
How firm the faithful ties of tender love,
O let me bury one brave warrior ſlain,
Whoſe corſe lies blended with this breathleſs train!
Remember, he who thwarts the duteous will
Becomes th' approver and the cauſe of ill.
Thou wilt not hinder theſe my pious vows;
War, fierceſt war, this juſt demand allows:
The baſeſt tyranny alone is driven
To uſe the utmoſt power that chance has given.
Let but my ſoul its dear companion find,
Then ſate thy fury, if to blood inclin'd;
For in ſuch grief I draw my lingering breath,
Life is my dread, beyond the pangs of death.
There is no ill that now can wound my breaſt,
No good, but what I in my Love poſſeſt:
Fly then, ye hours! that keep me from the dead;
For he, the ſpirit of my life, is fled.
If adverſe Heaven my lateſt wiſh deny,
On his dear corſe to fix my cloſing eye,
My tortur'd ſoul, in cruel Fate's deſpight,
Will ſoar, the faithful partner of his flight.
And now her agony of heart implor'd
An end of all her ſorrows from my ſword.
Doubt and diſtruſt my troubled mind aſſail,
That fears deceit in her affecting tale;
Nor was I fully of her faith ſecure,
Till oft her words the mournful truth inſure;
Suſpicion whiſper'd, that an artful ſpy
By this illuſion might our ſtate deſcry.
Howe'er inclin'd to doubt, yet ſoon I knew,
Though night conceal'd her features from my view,
That truth was ſtamp'd on every word ſhe ſaid;
So full of grief, ſo free from guilty dread:
And that bold love, to every danger blind,
Had ſent her forth her ſlaughter'd Lord to find,

Who, in the onſet of our bloody ſtrife,
For brave diſtinction ſacrific'd his life.
Fill'd with compaſſion, when I ſaw her bent
To execute her chaſte and fond intent,
I led her weeping to the higher ſpot,
To guard whoſe precincts was that night my lot;
Securely there I begg'd her to relate
The perfect ſtory of her various fate;
From firſt to laſt her touching woes impart,
And by the tale relieve her loaded heart.
Ah! ſhe replied, relief I ne'er can know,
Till Death's kind aid ſhall terminate my woe!
Earth for my ills no remedy ſupplies,
Beyond all ſuff'rance my afflictions riſe:
Yet, though the taſk will agonize my ſoul,
Of my ſad ſtory I will tell the whole;
Grief, thus inforc'd, my life's weak thread may rend,
And in the killing tale my pangs may end.

The fair Indian then relates to Ercilla the particulars of her life, in a ſpeech of conſiderable length:—ſhe informs him, that her name is Tegualda;—that ſhe is the daughter of the Chieftain Brancól;—that her father had often preſſed her to marry, which ſhe had for ſome time declined, though ſolicited by many of the nobleſt Youths in her country; till, being appointed, in compliment to her beauty, to diſtribute the prizes, in a ſcene of public feſtivity, to thoſe who excelled in the manly exerciſes, ſhe was ſtruck by the accompliſhments of a gallant Youth, named Crepino, as ſhe beſtowed on him the reward of his victories;—that ſhe declared her choice to her father, after perceiving the Youth inſpired with a mutual affection for her;—that the old Chieftain was delighted by her chuſing ſo noble a character, and their marriage had been publicly ſolemnized but a month from that day. On this concluſion of her ſtory, ſhe burſts into new agonies of grief, and intreats Ercilla to let her pay her laſt duties to her huſband; or rather, to unite them again in a common grave. Ercilla endeavours to conſole her, by repeated promiſes of all the aſſiſtance in his power. In the moſt paſſionate exceſs of ſorrow,

ſhe

ſhe ſtill entreats him to end her miſerable life.—In this diſtreſſing ſcene, our Author is relieved by the arrival of a brother officer, who had been alſo ſtationed on the plain, and now informs Ercilla that the time of their appointed watch is expired. They join in comforting the unhappy Mourner, and conduct her into the fort; where they conſign her, for the remainder of the night, to *the decent care of married women*, to uſe the chaſte expreſſion of the generous and compaſſionate Ercilla.

CANTO XXI.

IN pure affection who has ſoar'd above
The tender pious proof of faithful love,
Which thus awak'd our ſympathetic care
For this unhappy, fond, barbarian Fair?
O that juſt Fame my humble voice would raiſe
To ſwell in loudeſt notes her laſting praiſe!
To ſpread her merits, in immortal rhyme,
Through every language, and through every clime!
With pitying females ſhe the night remain'd,
Where no rude ſtep their privacy profan'd;
Though wretched, thankful for their ſoothing aid,
With hopes her duty would at length be paid.
Soon as the welcome light of morning came,
Though ſoundeſt ſleep had ſeiz'd my jaded frame,
Though my tir'd limbs were ſtill to reſt inclin'd,
Solicitude awak'd my anxious mind.
Quick to my Indian Mourner I repair,
And ſtill in tears I find the reſtleſs Fair;
The varying hours afford her no relief,
No tranſient momentary pauſe of grief.
With trueſt pity I her pangs aſſuage;
To find her ſlaughter'd Lord my word engage;
Reſtore his corſe, and, with a martial band,
Eſcort her ſafely to her native land.

With

With blended doubt and ſorrow, weeping ſtill,
My promis'd word ſhe pray'd me to fulfil.
Aſſembling now a menial Indian train,
I led her to explore the bloody plain:
Where heaps of mingled dead deform'd the ground,
Near to the fort the breathleſs Chief we found;
Clay-cold and ſtiff, the gory earth he preſt,
A fatal ball had paſs'd his manly breaſt.
Wretched Tegualda, who before her view'd
The pale disfigur'd form, in blood imbru'd,
Sprung forward, and with inſtantaneous force
Frantic ſhe darted on the precious corſe,
And preſs'd his lips, where livid death appears,
And bath'd his wounded boſom in her tears,
And kiſs'd the wound, and the wild hope purſues
That her fond breath may yet new life infuſe.
Wretch that I am! at length ſhe madly cried,
Why does my ſoul theſe agonies abide?
Why do I linger in this mortal ſtrife,
Nor pay to Love his juſt demand, my life?
Why, poor of ſpirit! at a ſingle blow
Do I not cloſe this bitter ſcene of woe?
Whence this delay? will Heaven to me deny
The wretch's choice and privilege, to die?
While, bent on death, in this deſpair ſhe gaſp'd,
Her furious hands her ſnowy neck inclaſp'd;
Failing her frantic wiſh, they do not ſpare
Her mournful viſage nor her flowing hair.
Much as I ſtrove to ſtop her mad intent,
Her fatal purpoſe I could ſcarce prevent:
So loath'd ſhe life, and with ſuch fierce controul
The raging thirſt of death inflam'd her ſoul.
When by my prayers, and ſoft perſuaſion's balm,
Her pangs of ſorrow grew a little calm,
And her mild ſpeech confirm'd my hope, at laſt,
That her delirious agony was paſt,

My

My ready Indian train, with duteous haſte,
On a firm bier the clay-cold body plac'd,
And bore the Warrior, in whoſe fate we griev'd,
To where her vaſſals the dear charge receiv'd.
But, leſt from ruthleſs War's outrageous ſway
The mourning Fair might ſuffer on her way,
O'er the near mountains, to a ſafer land,
I march'd to guard her with my warlike band;
And there ſecure, for the remaining road
Was clear and open to her own abode,
She gratefully declin'd my farther care,
And thank'd and bleſs'd me in a parting prayer.

As I have been tempted to dwell much longer than I intended on ſome of the moſt pathetic incidents of this extraordinary poem, I ſhall give a more conciſe ſummary of the remaining cantos:——On Ercilla's return, the Spaniards continue to ſtrengthen their fort. They receive intelligence from an Indian ally, that the Barbarian army intend a freſh aſſault in the night. They are relieved from this alarm by the arrival of a large reinforcement from the Spaniſh cities in Chile:—on which event Colocolo prevails on the Indians to ſuſpend the attack. Caupolican, the Indian General, reviews all his forces; and the various Chieftains are well deſcribed. The Spaniſh Commander, Don Garcia, being now determined to march into the hoſtile diſtrict of Arauco, addreſſes his ſoldiers in a ſpirited harangue, requeſting them to remember the pious cauſe for which they fight, and to ſpare the life of every Indian who is diſpoſed to ſubmiſſion. They remove from their poſt, and paſs in boats over the broad river Biobio.

CANTO XXII.

THE Spaniards are attacked in their new quarters — a furious battle enſues. The Spaniards are forced to give ground, but at laſt prevail. The Indian Chief, Rengo, ſignalizes himſelf in the action; defends himſelf in a marſh, and retreats in good order with his forces.

The Spaniards, after the conflict, ſeize an unhappy ſtraggling Youth, named Galvarino, whom they puniſh as a rebel in the moſt barbarous manner, by cutting off both his hands. The valiant Youth defies their cruelty in the midſt of this horrid ſcene; and, brandiſhing his bloody ſtumps, departs from his oppreſſors with the moſt inſulting menaces of revenge.

CANTO XXIII.

GALVARINO appears in the Aſſembly of the Indian Chieftains, and excites them, in a very animated ſpeech, to revenge the barbarity with which he has been treated. He faints from loſs of blood, in the cloſe of his harangue, but is recovered by the care of his friends, and reſtored to health. The Indians, exaſperated by the ſight of his wounds, unanimouſly determine to proſecute the war. The Spaniards, advancing in Arauco, ſend forth ſcouts to diſcover the diſpoſition of the neighbouring tribes. Ercilla, engaging in this ſervice, perceives an old Indian in a ſequeſtered ſpot, apparently ſinking under the infirmities of age; but, on his approach, the ancient figure flies from him with aſtoniſhing rapidity. He endeavours in vain, though on horſeback, to overtake this aged fugitive, who ſoon eſcapes from his ſight. He now diſcovers the tame Deer foretold in his viſion; and, purſuing it, is conducted through intricate paths to a retired cottage, where a courteous old man receives him in a friendly manner. Ercilla enquires after the Magician Fiton: the old man undertakes to guide him to the ſecret manſion of that wonderful Necromancer, to whom he declares himſelf related. He adds, that he himſelf was once a diſtinguiſhed warrior; but, having the misfortune to ſully his paſt glory, without loſing his life, in a conflict with another Chieftain, he had withdrawn himſelf from ſociety, and lived twenty years as a hermit. He now leads Ercilla through a gloomy grove to the cell of the Magician, whoſe reſidence and magical apparatus are deſcribed with great force of imagination. Fiton appears from a ſecret portal, and proves to be the aged figure who had eſcaped ſo ſwiftly from the ſight of Ercilla. At the requeſt of

his

his relation, the old Warrior, he condeſcends to ſhew Ercilla the wonders of his art. He leads him to a large lucid globe, ſelf-ſuſpended in the middle of an immenſe apartment. He tells him it is the work of forty years ſtudy, and contains an exact repreſentation of the world, with this ſingular power, that it exhibits, at his command, any ſcene of futurity which he wiſhes to behold:—that, knowing the heroic compoſition of Ercilla, he will give him an opportunity to vary and embelliſh his poem by the deſcription of a moſt important ſea-fight, which he will diſplay to him moſt diſtinctly on that ſphere. He then invokes all the powers of the infernal world. Ercilla fixes his eye on the globe, and perceives the naval forces of Spain, with thoſe of the Pope and the Venetians, prepared to engage the great armament of the Turks.

CANTO XXIV.

DESCRIBES circumſtantially the naval battle of Lepanto, and celebrates the Spaniſh admiral, Don John of Auſtria. Ercilla gazes with great delight on this glorious action, and beholds the complete triumph of his countrymen; when the Magician ſtrikes the globe with his wand, and turns the ſcene into darkneſs. Ercilla, after being entertained with other marvellous ſights, which he omits from his dread of prolixity, takes leave of his two aged friends, and regains his quarters. The Spaniards continue to advance: on their pitching their camp in a new ſpot, towards evening, an Araucanian, fantaſtically dreſt in armour, enquires for the tent of Don Garcia, and is conducted to his preſence.

CANTO XXV.

THE Araucanian delivers a defiance to Don Garcia, in the name of Caupolican, who challenges the Spaniſh General to end the war by a ſingle combat. The meſſenger adds, that the whole Indian army will deſcend into the plain, on the next morning, to be ſpectators of the

duel. Don Garcia diſmiſſes him with an acceptance of the challenge. At the dawn of day the Indian forces appear in three diviſions. A party of Spaniſh horſe precipitately attack their left wing, before which Caupolican was advancing. They are repulſed. A general and obſtinate engagement enſues. The mangled Galvarino appears at the head of one Indian ſquadron, and excites his countrymen to revenge his wrongs. Many Spaniards are named who diſtinguiſh themſelves in the battle. Among the Indian Chiefs Tucapel and Rengo diſplay the moſt ſplendid acts of valour; and, though perſonal enemies, they mutually defend each other. Caupolican alſo, at the head of the left ſquadron, obliges the Spaniards to retreat; and the Araucanians are on the point of gaining a deciſive victory, when the fortune of the day begins to turn.

CANTO XXVI.

THE reſerved guard of the Spaniards, in which Ercilla was ſtationed, advancing to the charge, recover the field, and oblige the main body of the Indians to fly. Caupolican, though victorious in his quarter, ſounds a retreat when he perceives this event. The Indians fly in great diſorder. Rengo for ſome time ſuſtains an unequal conflict, and at laſt retreats ſullenly into a wood, where he collects ſeveral of the ſcattered fugitives. As Ercilla happened to advance towards this ſpot, a Spaniard, called Remon, exhorts him by name to attempt the dangerous but important exploit of forcing this Indian party from the wood. His honour being thus piqued, he ruſhes forward with a few followers, and, after an obſtinate engagement, in which many of the Indians are cut to pieces, the Spaniards obtain the victory, and return to their camp with ſeveral priſoners. After this great defeat of the Indian army, the Spaniards, to deter their enemies from all future reſiſtance, barbarouſly reſolve to execute twelve Chieftains of diſtinction, whom they find among their captives, and to leave their bodies expoſed on the trees that ſurrounded the field of battle. The generous Ercilla, lamenting this inhuman ſentence, intercedes particularly for the life of one, alledging

that he had ſeen him united with the Spaniards. This perſon proves to be Galvarino; who, on hearing the interceſſion for his life, produces his mangled arms, which he had concealed in his boſom, and, giving vent to his deteſtation of the Spaniards, inſiſts on dying with his countrymen. Ercilla perſiſts in vain in his endeavour to ſave him. As no executioner could be found among the Spaniſh ſoldiers, a new mode of deſtruction, ſays our Poet, was invented; and every Indian was ordered to terminate his own life by a cord which was given him. Theſe brave men haſtened to accompliſh their fate with as much alacrity, continues Ercilla, as the moſt ſpirited warrior marches to an attack. One alone of the twelve begins to heſitate, and pray for mercy; declaring himſelf the lineal deſcendant of the moſt ancient race and ſovereign of the country. He is interrupted by the reproaches of the impetuous Galvarino, and, repenting his timidity, atones for it by inſtant death.

The Spaniards advance ſtill farther in the country, and raiſe a fort where Valdivia had periſhed. Ercilla finds his old friend the Magician once more, who tells him that Heaven thought proper to puniſh the pride of the Araucanians by their late defeat; but that the Spaniards would ſoon pay dearly for their preſent triumph. The Wizard retires after this prophecy, and, with much intreaty, allows Ercilla to follow him. Coming to a gloomy rock, he ſtrikes it with his wand; a ſecret door opens, and they enter into a delicious garden, which the Poet commends for its ſymmetry, expreſsly declaring that every hedge *has its brother*. The Magician leads him into a vault of alabaſter; and, perceiving his wiſh, though he does not expreſs it, of ſeeing the miraculous globe again, the courteous Fiton conducts him to it.

CANTO XXVII.

THE Magician diſplays to our Poet the various countries of the globe; particularly pointing out to him the ancient caſtle of Ercilla, the ſeat of his anceſtors in Biſcay, and the ſpot where his ſovereign Philip the Second was ſoon to build his magnificent palace, the Eſcurial. Having ſhewn him the various nations of the earth on his marvellous ſphere, Fiton conducts his gueſt to the road leading to the

Spaniſh

Spaniſh camp, where the ſoldiers of Ercilla were ſeeking their officer. The Spaniards in vain attempt to ſooth and to terrify the Araucanians into peace; and, finding the importance of their preſent poſt, they determine to ſtrengthen it. Ercilla proceeds with a party to the city of Imperial, to provide neceſſaries for this purpoſe. On his return, as he is marching through the country of ſome pacific Indians, he diſcovers, at the cloſe of day, a diſtreſt female, who attempts to fly, but is overtaken by Ercilla.

CANTO XXVIII.

THE fair fugitive, whom our Poet deſcribes as ſingularly beautiful, relates her ſtory. She tells him her name is Glaura, the daughter of an opulent Chieftain, with whom ſhe lived moſt happily, till a brother of her father's, who frequently reſided with him, perſecuted her with an unwarrantable paſſion;—that ſhe in vain repreſented to him the impious nature of his love;—he perſiſted in his frantic attachment, and, on the appearance of a hoſtile party of Spaniards, ruſhed forth to die in her defence, intreating her to receive his departing ſpirit. He fell in the action; her father ſhared the ſame fate: ſhe herſelf eſcaped at a poſtern gate into the woods. Two negroes, laden with ſpoil, diſcovered, and ſeized her. Her cries brought a young Indian, named Cariolano, to her reſcue: he ſhot an arrow into the heart of the firſt ruffian, and ſtabbed the ſecond. Glaura expreſſed her gratitude by receiving her young deliverer as her huſband. Before they could regain a place of ſafety, they were alarmed by the approach of Spaniards. The generous Youth intreated Glaura to conceal herſelf in a tree, while he ventured to meet the enemy. In her terror ſhe ſubmitted to this expedient, which, on recovery from her panic, ſhe bitterly repented; for when ſhe iſſued from her retreat, ſhe ſought in vain for Cariolano, and ſuppoſed, from the clamour ſhe had heard, that he muſt have periſhed. She continued to wander in this wretched ſtate of mind, ſtill unable to hear any tidings of her protector. While the fair Indian thus cloſes her narrative, Ercilla is alarmed by the approach of a large party of Barbarians. One of his faithful Indian attendants, whom he had lately attached to him,

intreats him to eſcape with the utmoſt haſte; adding, that he can ſave him from purſuit by his knowledge of the country; and that he will riſque his own life moſt willingly, to preſerve that of Ercilla. Glaura burſts into an agony of joy, in diſcovering her loſt Cariolano in this faithful attendant. Ercilla exclaims, "Adieu, my friends; I give you "both your liberty, which is all I have at preſent to beſtow," and rejoins his little troop. Before he enters on the account of what followed, he relates the circumſtance by which he attached Cariolano to his ſervice; whom he had found alone, as he himſelf was marching with a ſmall party, and a few priſoners that he had taken. The Youth at firſt defended himſelf, and ſhot two Spaniards with his arrows, and continued to reſiſt the numbers that preſſed upon him, with his mantle and his dagger evading their blows by his extreme agility, and wounding ſeveral. Ercilla generouſly ruſhed in to his reſcue, and declared he deſerved a reward for his uncommon bravery, inſtead of being deſtroyed ſo unfairly. The Youth, in conſequence of this treatment, flung down his dagger, and became the affectionate attendant of Ercilla. Our Poet, after relating this incident, returns to the ſcene where his party was ſurprized in a hollow road, and ſeverely galled by the enemy, who attacked them with ſhowers of ſtones from the higher ground. Ercilla forces his way up the precipice, and, after diſperſing part of the Indian force, effects his eſcape with a few followers; but all are wounded, and obliged to leave their baggage in the poſſeſſion of their numerous enemies.

CANTO XXIX.

OPENS with an encomium on the love of our country, and the ſignal proofs of this virtue which the Araucanians diſplayed; who, notwithſtanding their loſs of four great battles in the ſpace of three months, ſtill continue firm in their reſolution of defending their liberty. Caupolican propoſes, in a public aſſembly, to ſet fire to their own habitations, and leave themſelves no alternative, but that of killing or being killed. The Chieftains all agree in this deſperate determination. Tucapel,

capel, before they proceed to action againſt the Spaniards, inſiſts on terminating his difference with Rengo, a rival Chieftain, by a ſingle combat. A plain is appointed for this purpoſe: all the people of Arauco aſſemble as ſpectators: the Chiefs appear in complete armour, and engage in a moſt obſtinate and bloody conflict.

CANTO XXX.

AFTER many dreadful wounds on each ſide, the two Chieftains, cloſing with each other, fall together, and, after a fruitleſs ſtruggle for victory, remain ſpeechleſs on the ground. Caupolican, who preſided as judge of the combat, deſcends from his ſeat, and, finding ſome ſigns of life in each, orders them to be carried to their reſpective tents. They recover, and are reconciled. The Spaniards, leaving a garriſon in their new fort, under a captain named Reynoſo, had proceeded to the city of Imperial. Caupolican endeavours to take advantage of this event. He employs an artful Indian, named Pran, to examine the ſtate of the fort. Pran inſinuates himſelf among the Indian ſervants belonging to the Spaniards. He views the fort, and endeavours to perſuade a ſervile Indian, named Andreſillo, to admit Caupolican and his forces while the Spaniards are ſleeping. Andreſillo promiſes to meet Caupolican in ſecret, and converſe with him on this project.

CANTO XXXI.

OPENS with a ſpirited invective againſt treachery in war, and particularly thoſe traitors who betray their country. Andreſillo reveals all that had paſſed to his Spaniſh captain; who promiſes him a great reward if he will aſſiſt in making the ſtratagem of the Indians an inſtrument of deſtruction to thoſe who contrived it. They concert a plan for this purpoſe. Andreſillo meets Caupolican in ſecret, and promiſes to introduce

introduce the Indian forces into the fort when the Spaniards are ſleeping, in the heat of the day. Pran is ſent forward, to learn from Andreſillo if all things are quiet, juſt before the hour appointed for the aſſault. He examines the ſtate of the fort, and, finding the Spaniards apparently unprepared for defence, haſtens back to the Indian General, who advances by a quick and ſilent march. The Spaniards in the interim point all their guns, and prepare for the moſt bloody reſiſtance.

CANTO XXXII.

AFTER a panegyric on clemency, and a noble cenſure of thoſe enormous cruelties, by which his countrymen ſullied their military fame, the Poet relates the dreadful carnage which enſued as the Indians approached the fort. The Spaniards, after deſtroying numbers by their artillery, ſend forth a party of horſe, who cut the fugitives to pieces. They inhumanly murder thirteen of their moſt diſtinguiſhed priſoners, by blowing them from the mouths of cannon: but none of the confederate Chieftains, whom the Poet has particularly celebrated, were included in this number; for thoſe high-ſpirited Barbarians had refuſed to attend Caupolican in this aſſault, as they conſidered it as diſgraceful to attack their enemies by ſurprize. The unfortunate Indian Leader, ſeeing his forces thus unexpectedly maſſacred, eſcapes with ten faithful followers, and wanders through the country in the moſt calamitous condition. The Spaniards endeavour, by all the means they can deviſe, to diſcover his retreat: the faithful inhabitants of Arauco refuſe to betray him.

Ercilla, in ſearching the country with a ſmall party, finds a young wounded female. She informs him, that marching with her huſband, ſhe had the misfortune of ſeeing him periſh in the late ſlaughter;—that a friendly ſoldier, in pity to her extreme diſtreſs, had tried to end her miſerable life in the midſt of the confuſion, but had failed in his generous deſign, by giving her an ineffectual wound;—that ſhe had been removed from the field of battle to that ſequeſtered ſpot, where ſhe lan-

guiſhed in the hourly hope of death, which ſhe now implores from the hand of Ercilla. Our Poet conſoles her; dreſſes her wound, and leaves one of his attendants to protect her. On his return to the fort, he diſcourſes to his ſoldiers in praiſe of the fidelity and ſpirit diſplayed by the Indian females, comparing them to the chaſte and conſtant Dido. A young ſoldier of his train expreſſes his ſurprize on hearing Ercilla commend the Carthaginian Queen for a virtue to which, he conceived, ſhe had no pretence. From hence our Poet takes occaſion to vindicate the injured Eliza from the ſlanderous miſrepreſentation of Virgil; and flatters himſelf that the love of juſtice, ſo natural to man, will induce every reader to liſten with pleaſure to his defence of the calumniated Queen. He then enters on her *real hiſtory*, and relates circumſtantially her lamentation over the murdered Sichæus, and the artifice by which ſhe eſcaped with her treaſures from her inhuman brother Pygmalion:—ſhe engages many of his attendants to ſhare the chances of her voyage; and, having collected a ſupply of females from the iſland of Cyprus, ſhe directs her courſe to the coaſt of Africa.

CANTO XXXIII.

DIDO, as our Poet continues her *more authentic ſtory*, purchaſes her dominion and raiſes her flouriſhing city. The ambaſſadors of Iarbas arrive at Carthage, to offer this celebrated Queen the alternative of marriage or war. The Senate, who are firſt informed of the propoſal, being fearful that the chaſte reſolutions of their fair Sovereign may ruin their country, attempt to engage her, by a ſingular device, to accept the hand of Iarbas. They tell her, that this haughty Monarch has ſent to demand twenty of her privy counſellors to regulate his kingdom; and that, in conſideration of their age and infirmities, they muſt decline ſo unpleaſant a ſervice. The Queen repreſents to them the danger of their refuſal, and the duty which they owe to their country; declaring, that ſhe would moſt readily ſacrifice her own life for the ſafety or advantage of her ſubjects. The Senators then reveal to her the real demand

demand of Iarbas, and urge the neceſſity of her marriage for the preſervation of the ſtate. The faithful Dido knows not what to reſolve, and demands three months to conſider of this delicate and important point: —at the cloſe of that period, ſhe aſſembles her ſubjects; and, taking leave of them in a very affectionate harangue, declares her reſolution to die, as the only means by which ſhe can at once ſatisfy both Heaven and earth, by diſcharging her duty to her people, and at the ſame time preſerving her faith inviolate to her departed Sichæus. Invoking his name, ſhe plunges a poniard in her breaſt; and throws herſelf on a flaming pile, which had been kindled for a different ſacrifice. Her grateful ſubjects lament her death, and pay divine honours to her memory. "This * (ſays our Poet) is the true and genuine ſtory of the famous defamed Dido, whoſe moſt honoured chaſtity has been belied by the inconſiderate Virgil, to embelliſh his poetical fictions."

Our Poet returns from this digreſſion on Dido, to the fate of the Indian Leader Caupolican.—One of the priſoners, whom the Spaniards had taken in their ſearch after this unfortunate Chief, is at laſt tempted by bribes to betray his General. He conducts the Spaniards to a ſpot near the ſequeſtered retreat of Caupolican, and directs them how to diſcover it; but refuſes to advance with them, overcome by his dread of the Hero whom he is tempted to betray. The Spaniards ſurround the houſe in which the Chieftain had taken refuge with his ten faithful aſſociates. Alarmed by a centinel, he prepares for defence; but being ſoon wounded in the arm, ſurrenders, endeavouring to conceal his high character, and to make the Spaniards believe him an ordinary ſoldier.

With their accuſtom'd ſhouts, and greedy toil,
Our furious troops now riot in their ſpoil;

* Eſte es el cierto y verdadero cuento,
De la famoſa Dido disfamada
Que Virgilio Maron ſin miramiento
Falſeó ſu hiſtoria y caſtidad preciada
Por dar a ſus ficciones ornamento
Pues vemos que eſta Reyna importunada
Pudiéndoſe caſar y no quemarſe
Antes quemarſe quiſo, que caſarſe.

Through the lone village their quick rapine ſpread,
Nor leave unpillag'd e'en a ſingle ſhed:
When, from a tent, that, plac'd on ſafer ground,
The neighbouring hill's uncultur'd ſummit crown'd,
A woman ruſh'd, who, in her haſty flight,
Ran through the rougheſt paths along the rocky height.
A Negro of our train, who mark'd her way,
Soon made the hapleſs fugitive his prey;
For thwarting crags her doubtful ſteps impede,
And the fair form was ill prepar'd for ſpeed;
For at her breaſt ſhe bore her huddled ſon;
To fifteen months the infant's life had run:
From our brave captive ſprung the blooming boy,
Of both his parents the chief pride and joy.
The Negro careleſsly his victim brought,
Nor knew th' important prize his haſte had caught.
Our ſoldiers now, to catch the cooling tide,
Had ſallied to the murmuring river's ſide:
When the unhappy Wife beheld her Lord,
His ſtrong arms bound with a diſgraceful cord,
Stript of each enſign of his paſt command,
And led the pris'ner of our ſhouting band;
Her anguiſh burſt not into vain complaint,
No female terrors her firm ſoul attaint;
But, breathing fierce diſdain, and anger wild,
Thus ſhe exclaim'd, advancing with her child:
The ſtronger arm that in this ſhameful band
Has tied thy weak effeminated hand,
Had nobler pity to thy ſtate expreſt
If it had bravely pierc'd that coward breaſt.
Wert thou the warrior whoſe heroic worth
So ſwiftly flew around the ſpacious earth,
Whoſe name alone, unaided by thy arm,
Shook the remoteſt clime with fear's alarm?
Wert thou the victor whoſe triumphant ſtrain
Promis'd with rapid ſword to vanquiſh Spain;

To make new realms Arauco's power revere,
And ſpread her empire o'er the Arctic ſphere?
Wretch that I am! how was my heart deceiv'd,
In all the noble pride with which it heav'd,
When through the world my boaſted title ran,
Treſia, the wife of great Caupolican!
Now, plung'd in miſery from the heights of fame,
My glories end in this deteſted ſhame,
To ſee thee captive in a lonely ſpot,
When death and honour might have been thy lot!
What now avail thy ſcenes of happier ſtrife,
So dearly bought by many a nobler life;
The wondrous feats, that valour ſcarce believ'd,
By thee with hazard and with toil atchiev'd?
Where are the vaunted fruits of thy command,
The laurels gather'd by this fetter'd hand?
All ſunk! all turn'd to this abhorr'd diſgrace,
To live the ſlave of this ignoble race!
Say, had thy ſoul no ſtrength, thy hand no lance,
To triumph o'er the fickle pow'r of chance?
Doſt thou not know, that, to the Warrior's name,
A gallant exit gives immortal fame?
Behold the burthen which my breaſt contains,
Since of thy love no other pledge remains!
Hadſt thou in glory's arms reſign'd thy breath,
We both had follow'd thee in joyous death:
Take, take thy ſon! he was a tie moſt dear,
Which ſpotleſs love once made my heart revere;
Take him!—by generous pain, and wounded pride,
The currents of this fruitful breaſt are dried:
Rear him thyſelf, for thy gigantic frame,
To woman turn'd, a woman's charge may claim:
A mother's title I no more deſire,
Or ſhameful children from a ſhameful ſire!
As thus ſhe ſpoke, with growing madneſs ſtung,
The tender nurſling from her arms ſhe flung

With ſavage fury, haſt'ning from our ſight,
While anguiſh ſeem'd to aid her rapid flight.
Vain were our efforts; our indignant cries,
Nor gentle prayers, nor angry threats, ſuffice
To make her breaſt, where cruel frenzy burn'd,
Receive the little innocent ſhe ſpurn'd.

The Spaniards, after providing a nurſe for this unfortunate child, return with their priſoner Caupolican to their fort, which they enter in triumph.

The Indian General, perceiving that all attempts to conceal his quality are ineffectual, deſires a conference with the Spaniſh Captain Reynoſo.

CANTO XXXIV.

CAUPOLICAN entreats Reynoſo to grant his life, but without any ſigns of terror. He affirms it will be the only method of appeaſing the ſanguinary hatred by which the contending nations are inflamed; and he offers, from his great influence over his country, to introduce the Chriſtian worſhip, and to bring the Araucanians to conſider themſelves as the ſubjects of the Spaniſh Monarch. His propoſals are rejected, and he is ſentenced to be impaled, and ſhot to death with arrows. He is unappall'd by this decree; but firſt deſires to be publicly baptized: after which ceremony, he is inhumanly led in chains to a ſcaffold. He diſplays a calm contempt of death; but, on ſeeing a wretched Negro appointed his executioner, his indignation burſts forth, and he hurls the Negro from the ſcaffold, entreating to die by a more honourable hand. His horrid ſentence is however executed. He ſupports the agonies of the ſtake with patient intrepidity, till a choſen band of archers put a period to his life.

Our brave Ercilla expreſſes his abhorrence of this atrocious ſcene; and adds, that if he had been preſent, this cruel execution ſhould not have taken place.

The conſequence of it was ſuch as Caupolican foretold:—the Araucanians determine to revenge his death, and aſſemble to elect a new Ge-

neral. The Poet makes an abrupt tranſition from their debate, to relate the adventures of Don Garcia, with whom he was himſelf marching to explore new regions. The inhabitants of the diſtricts they invade, alarmed at the approach of the Spaniards, conſult on the occaſion. An Indian, named Tunconabala, who had ſerved under the Araucanians, addreſſes the aſſembly, and recommends to them a mode of eluding the ſuppoſed avaricious deſigns of the Spaniards, by ſending meſſengers to them, who ſhould aſſume an appearance of extreme poverty, and repreſent their country as barren, and thus induce the invaders to turn their arms towards a different quarter. He offers to engage in this ſervice himſelf. The Indians adopt the project he recommends, and remove their valuable effects to the interior parts of their country.

CANTO XXXV.

DON GARCIA being arrived at the boundaries of Chile, which no Spaniard had paſſed, encourages his ſoldiers, in a ſpirited harangue, to the acquiſition of the new provinces which lay before them. They enter a rude and rocky country, in which they are expoſed to many hazards by their deceitful guides. Tunconabala meets them, as he had projected, with the appearance of extreme poverty; and, after many aſſurances of the ſterility of that region, adviſes them to return, or to advance by a different path, which he repreſents to them as dangerous, but the only practicable road. On finding them reſolved to preſs forward, he ſupplies them with a guide. They advance, with great toil and danger. Their guide eſcapes from them. They continue their march, through various hardſhips, in a deſolate region. They at length diſcover a fertile plain, and a large lake with many little inhabited iſlands. As they approach the lake, a large gondola, with twelve oars, advances to meet them: the party it contained leap aſhore, and ſalute the Spaniards with expreſſions of amity.

CANTO XXXVI.

THE young Chieftain of the gondola ſupplies the Spaniards with proviſions, refuſing to accept any reward: and our Poet celebrates all the inhabitants of this region, for their amiable ſimplicity of manners. He viſits one of the principal iſlands, where he is kindly entertained. He diſcovers that the lake had a communication with the ſea, by a very rough and dangerous channel: this circumſtance obliges the Spaniards, though reluctant, to return. They lament the neceſſity of paſſing again through the hardſhips of their former road. A young Indian undertakes to conduct them by an eaſier way. But our adventurous Ercilla, before the little army ſet forth on their return, engages ten choſen aſſociates to embark with him in a ſmall veſſel, and paſs the dangerous channel. He lands on a wild and ſandy ſpot, and, advancing half a mile up the country, engraves a ſtanza, to record this adventure, on the bark of a tree. He repaſſes the channel, and rejoins the Spaniſh troops; who, after much difficulty, reach the city of Imperial. Our Poet then touches on ſome particulars of his perſonal hiſtory, which I mention in the ſlight ſketch of his life. He afterwards promiſes his reader to relate the iſſue of the debate among the Araucanian Chieftains, on the election of their new General; but, recollecting in the inſtant that Spain herſelf is in arms, he entreats the favour of his Sovereign to inſpire him with new ſpirit, that he may devote himſelf to that higher and more intereſting ſubject.

CANTO XXXVII.

OUR Poet, in this his laſt canto, ſeems to begin a new work. He enters into a diſcuſſion of Philip's right to the dominion of Portugal, and his acquiſition of that kingdom; when, ſinking under the weight of this new ſubject, he declares his reſolution of leaving it to ſome happier Poet. He recapitulates the various perils and hardſhips of his own life, and, remarking that he has ever been unfortunate, and that all his labours are unrewarded, he conſoles himſelf with the reflection, that honour

honour conſiſts not in the poſſeſſion of rewards, but in the conſciouſneſs of having deſerved them. He concludes with a pious reſolution to withdraw himſelf from the vain purſuits of the world, and to devote himſelf to God.

NOTE XI. VERSE 280.

At once the Bard of Glory and of Love.] The Epic powers of Camoens have received their due honour in our language, by the elegant and ſpirited tranſlation of Mr. Mickle; but our country is ſtill a ſtranger to the lighter graces and pathetic ſweetneſs of his ſhorter compoſitions. Theſe, as they are illuſtrated by the Spaniſh notes of his indefatigable Commentator, *Manuel de Faria*, amount to two volumes in folio. I ſhall preſent the reader with a ſpecimen of his Sonnets, for which he is celebrated as the rival of Petrarch. Of the three tranſlations which follow, I am indebted for the two firſt to an ingenious friend, from whom the public may wiſh me to have received more extenſive obligations of a ſimilar nature. It may be proper to add, that the firſt Sonnet of Camoens, like that of Petrarch, is a kind of preface to the amorous poetry of its author.

SONETO I.

EM quanto quis Fortuna que tiveſſe
Eſperanca de algum contentamento,
O goſto de hum ſuave penſamento
Me fez que ſeus effeytos eſcreveſſe.
Porèm temendo Amor que aviſo deſſe
Minha eſcritura a algum juizo iſento,
Eſcureccome o engenho co' o tormento,
Para que ſeus enganos nāo diſſeſſe
O vós, que amor obriga a ſer ſogeytos
A diverſas vontades! quando lerdes
Num breve livro caſos tāo diverſos;
Verdades puras ſāo, & nāo defeytos.
Entendey que ſegundo o amor tiverdes,
Tircis o entendimento de meus verſos.

SONETO XIX.

ALMA minha gentil, que te partiſte
Tāo cedo deſta vida deſcontente,
Repouſa lâ no ceo eternamente,
E viva eu cà na terra ſempre triſte.
Se là no aſſento etereo, onde ſubiſte,
Memoria deſta vida ſe conſente,
Nāo te eſqueças de aquelle amor ardente
Que já nos olhos meus tāo puro viſte.
Eſe vires que póde merecerte
Algūa couſa a dor queme ficou
Da magoa, ſem remedio, de perderte,
Roga a Deos que teus annos encurtou,
Que tāo cedo de câ me leve a verte,
Quāo cedo de meus olhos te levou.

SONNET I.

WHILE on my head kind Fortune deign'd to pour
Her laviſh boons, and through my willing ſoul
Made tides of extaſy and pleaſure roll,
I ſung the raptures of each paſſing hour.
But Love, who heard me praiſe the golden ſhower,
Reſolv'd my fond preſumption to controul;
And painful darkneſs o'er my ſpirit ſtole,
Leſt I ſhould dare to tell his treacherous power.
O ye, whom his hard yoke compels to bend
To others' will, if in my various lay
Sad plaints ye find, and fears, and cruel wrong,
To ſuffering nature and to truth attend;
For in the meaſure ye have felt his ſway,
Your ſympathizing hearts will feel my ſong.

SONNET XIX.

ON ~~THE DEATH OF THE~~ POET'S MISTRESS,
DONNA CATALINA DE ATAIDE,
~~WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.~~

GO, gentle ſpirit! now ſupremely bleſt,
From ſcenes of pain and ſtruggling virtue go:
From thy immortal ſeat of heavenly reſt
Behold us lingering in a world of woe!
And if beyond the grave, to ſaints above,
Fond memory ſtill the tranſient paſt pourtrays,
Blame not the ardor of my conſtant love,
Which in theſe longing eyes was wont to blaze.
But if from virtue's ſource my ſorrows riſe,
For the ſad loſs I never can repair,
Be thine to juſtify my endleſs ſighs,
And to the Throne of Grace prefer thy prayer,
That Heaven, who made thy ſpan of life ſo brief,
May ſhorten mine, and give my ſoul relief.

SONETO LXXII.

QUANDO de minhas magoas a comprida
Maginaçaõ os olhos me adormece,
Em ſonhos aquella alma me aparece
Que para mi foy ſonho neſta vida.
Lá numa ſoidade, onde eſtendida
A viſta por o campo desfallece,
Corro apos ella; & ella entaõ parece
Que maes de mi ſe alonga, compelida,
Brado: Naõ me fujays, ſombra benina.
Ella (os olhos em mi c'hum brado pejo,
Como quem diz, que ja naõ pode ſer)
Torna a fugirme: torno a bradar; dina:
E antes q' acabe em mene, acordo, & vejo
Que nem hum breve engano poſſo ter.

The Spaniſh Commentator of Camoens conſiders this viſion as the moſt exquiſite Sonnet of his author, and affirms that it is ſuperior to the much longer poem of Petrarch's, on a ſimilar idea. It may amuſe a curious reader to compare both Camoens and Petrarch, on this occaſion, with Milton, who has alſo written a Sonnet on the ſame ſubject. The Commentator Faria has a very pleaſant remark on this ſpecies of compoſition. He vindicates the dignity of the amorous Sonnet, by producing an alphabetical liſt of two hundred great Poets, who have thus complimented the object of their affection; and he very gravely introduces Achilles as the leader of this choir, for having celebrated Briſeis. If the Sonnets of the Portugueze Poet are worthy of attention, his Elegies are perhaps ſtill more ſo, as they illuſtrate many particulars of his intereſting life, which ended in 1579, under the moſt cruel circumſtances of neglect and poverty.

Portugal has produced no leſs than fourteen Epic poems; twelve in her

SONNET LXXII.

WHILE preſt with woes from which it cannot flee,
My fancy ſinks, and ſlumber ſeals my eyes,
Her ſpirit haſtens in my dreams to riſe,
Who was in life but as a dream to me.
O'er a drear waſte, ſo wide no eye can ſee
How far its ſenſe-evading limit lies,
I follow her quick ſtep; but ah! ſhe flies!
Our diſtance widening by ſtern Fate's decree.
Fly not from me, kind ſhadow! I exclaim:
She, with fix'd eyes, that her ſoft thoughts reveal,
And ſeem to ſay, "Forbear thy fond deſign!"
Still flies:—I call her; but her half-form'd name
Dies on my falt'ring tongue.—I wake, and feel
Not e'en one ſhort deluſion may be mine.

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her own language, and two in that of Spain. At the head of theſe ſtands the Luſiad of Camoens. The Malaca Conquiſtada of Franciſco de Sa' de Meneſis—and the Ulyſſea, or Liſboa Edificada, of Gabriel Pereira de Caſtro, are two of the moſt eminent among its ſucceſſors.—For a liſt of the Portugueze Epic Poets, and for an elegant copy of the Malaca Conquiſtada, I am indebted to the very liberal politeneſs of the Chevalier de Pinto, the Ambaſſador of Portugal.

NOTE XII. VERSE 287.

Where Eulogy, with one eternal ſmile.] Though a vain inſipidity may be conſidered as the general characteriſtic of the French *Eloges*, it is but juſt to remark, that ſeveral of theſe performances are an honour to the country which produced them; and particularly the little volume of *Eloges* lately publiſhed by Mr. D'Alembert. This agreeable Encomiaſt has

has varied and enlivened the tone of panegyric by the moſt happy mixture of amuſing anecdote, judicious criticiſm, and philoſophical precept: we may juſtly ſay of him, what he himſelf has ſaid of his predeceſſor Fontenelle: Il a ſolidement aſſuré ſa gloire .... par ces Eloges ſi intereſſans, pleins d'une raiſon ſi fine et ſi profonde, qui font aimer et reſpecter les lettres, qui inſpirent aux génies naiſſans la plus noble emulation, et qui feront paſſer le nom de l'auteur à la poſterité, avec celui de la compagnie célebre dont il a été le digne organe, et des grands hommes dont il s'eſt rendu l'egal en devenant leur panégyriſte.

D'Alembert, Eloge de la Motte, p. 279.

NOTE XIII. VERSE 302.

No great Examples riſe, but many a Rule.] Before the appearance of Boſſu's celebrated treatiſe on Epic poetry, the French had a ſimilar work written in Latin. The learned Jeſuit Mambrun publiſhed, in 1652, a quarto volume, entitled, Diſſertatio Peripatetica de Epico Carmine. His Diſſertation is founded on the principles of Ariſtotle, whom he conſiders as infallible authority; and he introduces the Greek Philoſopher to decide the following very curious queſtion, which he argues with becoming gravity, Whether the action of a woman can be ſufficiently ſplendid to prove a proper ſubject for an Epic poem.—Having reaſoned on this delicate point, with more learning than gallantry, he thus concludes the debate: Congruenter magis finem huic quæſtioni ponere non licet, quam verbis Ariſtotelis capite 15 Poeticæ, ubi de moribus diſputat, Δεύτερον δε, τα αρμοττοντα. Εστι γαρ ανδρειον μεν το ηθος, αλλ' ουκ αρμοττον γυναικι, το ανδρειαν η δεινην ειναι—id eſt, ſecunda proprietas morum eſt, ut ſint congruentes, ut eſſe fortem mos eſt aliquis; at non congruit mulieri fortem eſſe aut terribilem ut vertit Riccobonus, vel *prudentem* ut Pacius. The latter interpretation of the word δεινην would render the deciſion of theſe Philoſophers very ſevere indeed on the Female character, by ſuppoſing it incapable of diſplaying both fortitude and prudence.—The Fair Sex have found an advocate, on this occaſion, in a French Epic Poet. The famous Chapelain, in the preface to his unfortunate Pucelle, has very warmly attacked theſe ungallant maxims of Mambrun and Ariſtotle. In ſpeaking of certain critics, who had cenſured the choice of his ſubject, before the publication of his poem, he ſays, Ceux-cy, jurant ſur le texte d'Ariſtote,

riſtote, maintiennent que la femme eſt une erreur de la nature, qui ayant toujours intention de faire un homme, s'arreſte ſouvent en chemin, et ſe voit contrainte, par la reſiſtance de la matiere, de laiſſer ſon deſſein imparfait. Ils tiennent la force corporelle tellement neceſſaire, dans la compoſition d'un heros, que quand il n'y auroit autre defaut à reprocher à la femme, ils luy en refuſeroient le nom, pour cela ſeulement, qu'elle n'a pas la vigueur d'un Athlete, et que la molleſſe de ſa complexion l'empeſche de pouvoir durer au travail. Ils n'eſtiment ce Sexe capable d'aucune penſée heroique, dans la creance que l'eſprit ſuit le temperament du corps, et que, dans le corps de la femme, l'eſprit ne peut rien concevoir, qui ne ſe ſente de ſa foibleſſe. — — — Ces Meſſieurs me pardonneront, toutefois, ſi je leur dis qu'ils ne conſiderent pas trop bien quelle eſt la nature de la vertu heroique, qu'ils en definiſſent l'eſſence, par un de ſes moindres accidens, et qu'ils en font plutoſt une vertu brutale, qu'une vertu divine. — — — Ils ſe devroient ſouvenir que cette vertu n'a preſque rien à faire avec le corps, et qu'elle conſiſte, non dans les efforts d'un Milon de Crotone, où l'eſprit n'a aucune part, mais en ceux des ames nées pour les grandes choſes; quand par une ardeur pluſqu' humaine, elles s'elevent audeſſus d'elles-meſmes; qu'elles forment quelque deſſein, dont l'utilité eſt auſſi grande que la difficulté, et qu'elles choiſiſſent les moyens de l'executer avec conſtance et hauteur de courage. Pour prevenus qu'ils ſoient en faveurs des hommes, je ne penſe pas qu'ils vouluſſent attribuer à leur ame un ſeul avantage, auquel l'ame de la femme ne puſt aſpirer, ni faire deux eſpeces des deux ſexes, deſquels la raiſon de tous les ſages n'a fait qu'une juſqu'icy—je ne croy pas non plus qu'ils imaginent que les vertus morales ayent leur ſiege ailleurs, que dans la volonté, ou dans l'entendement. Mais ſi elles y ont leur ſiege, et ſi l'on ne peut dire que ces deux facultés ſoient autres, dans l'ame de la femme que dans l'ame de l'homme, ils ne peuvent, ſans abſurdité, accorder une de ces vertus à l'homme, et ne l'accorder pas à la femme. En effet, cette belle penſée d'Ariſtote qui a donné occaſion à leur erreur, eſt ſi peu phyſique, qu'elle fait plus de tort à la philoſophie du Lycée, qu'elle n'appuye l'opinion de ceux que nous combattons." Chapelain then enters into an hiſtorical defence of Female dignity, and oppoſes the authority of Plato to that of Ariſtotle, concerning the propriety of woman's ever appearing on the great theatre of active life. Happy had he ſupported

ported the Female cauſe as forcibly, in the execution of his poem, as in the arguments of his preface: but Chapelain was unfortunately one of the many examples, which every country affords, that the moſt perfect union of virtue and erudition is utterly inſufficient to form a Poet; and, as he had the ill fate to be perſecuted by the pitileſs rigour of Boileau, his inharmonious poem can never ſink into a deſirable oblivion. The treatiſe of Mambrun ſeems to have excited, among the French, an eagerneſs to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the field of Epic poetry; for ſeveral Epic poems were publiſhed in France in a few years after that work appeared; but moſt of them, and particularly thoſe on ſcriptural ſubjects, were hardly ever known to exiſt.

Le Jonas inconnu ſeche dans la pouſſiere,
Le David imprimé n'a point vu la lumiere,
Le Moïſe commence à moiſir par les bords.

BOILEAU, Sat. ix.

The Alaric of Scudery, and the Clovis of Deſmareſts, can ſcarce be reckoned more fortunate; but in this band of unſucceſsful Epic writers, there was one Poet, of whom even the ſevere Boileau could not allow himſelf to ſpeak ill; this was Le Moine, the author of St. Louis. The Satiriſt being aſked, why he had never mentioned the poetry of Le Moine? replied with the two following verſes, parodied from Corneille,

Il s'eſt trop élevé pour en dire du mal,
Il s'eſt trop égaré pour en dire du bien.

The judicious and candid Heyne has beſtowed conſiderable applauſe on Le Moine, in one of his notes to the 6th book of Virgil, where he examines the different methods by which the Epic Poets have introduced their various pictures of futurity. From his account, Le Moine excels in this article. I can ſpeak only from the opinion of this learned Critic, for the neglected French Poet is become ſo rare, that I have ſought in vain for a copy of his work.——The number of obſcure Epic writers in France is very trifling, compared to thoſe which Italy has produced; the Italians have been indefatigable in this ſpecies of compoſition, and, as if they had reſolved to leave no Hero unſung, their celebrated Noveliſt, Giraldi

Cinthio has written an Epic poem, in twenty-ſix cantos, on the exploits of Hercules.

NOTE XIV. VERSE 304.

Keen Boileau ſhall not want his proper praiſe.] Nicolas Boileau Deſpreaux was born *in* or *near* Paris, for it is a conteſted point, on the firſt of November 1636, and died in March 1711 of a dropſy, the very diſeaſe which terminated the life of his Engliſh rival. The Lutrin of Boileau, ſtill conſidered by ſome French Critics of the preſent time as the beſt poem to which France has given birth, was firſt publiſhed in 1674. It is with great reaſon and juſtice that Voltaire confeſſes the Lutrin inferior to the Rape of the Lock. Few Poets can be ſo properly compared as Pope and Boileau; and, wherever their writings will admit of compariſon, we may, without any national partiality, adjudge the ſuperiority to the Engliſh Bard. Theſe two great authors reſembled each other as much in the integrity of their lives, as in the ſubjects and execution of their ſeveral compoſitions. There are two actions recorded of Boileau, which ſufficiently prove that the inexorable Satiriſt had a moſt generous and friendly heart; when Patru, the celebrated Advocate, who was ruined by his paſſion for literature, found himſelf under the painful neceſſity of ſelling his expenſive library, and had almoſt agreed to part with it for a moderate ſum, Boileau gave him a much ſuperior price; and, after paying the money, added this condition to the purchaſe, that Patru ſhould retain, during his life, the poſſeſſion of the books. The ſucceeding inſtance of the Poet's generoſity is yet nobler:—when it was rumoured at court that the King intended to retrench the penſion of Corneille, Boileau haſtened to Madame de Monteſpan, and ſaid, that his Sovereign, equitable as he was, could not, without injuſtice, grant a penſion to an author like himſelf, juſt aſcending Parnaſſus, and take it from Corneille, who had ſo long been ſeated on the ſummit; that he entreated her, for the honour of the King, to prevail on his Majeſty rather to ſtrike off *his* penſion, than to withdraw that reward from a man whoſe title to it was incomparably greater; and that he ſhould more eaſily conſole himſelf under the loſs of that diſtinction, than under the affliction of ſeeing it taken away from ſuch a Poet as Corneille. This magnanimous application had the ſucceſs which it deſerved, and it

appears the more noble, when we recollect that the rival of Corneille was the intimate friend of Boileau.

The long and unreſerved intercourſe which ſubſiſted between our Poet and Racine was highly beneficial and honourable to both. The dying farewell of the latter is the moſt expreſſive eulogy on the private character of Boileau: Je regarde comme un bonheur pour moi de mourir avant vous, ſaid the tender Racine, in taking a final leave of his faithful and generous friend.

NOTE XV. VERSE 313.

Nor, gentle Greſſet, ſhall thy ſprightly rhyme.] This elegant and amiable writer was born at Amiens, and educated in the ſociety of the Jeſuits, to whom he has paid a grateful compliment in bidding them adieu. At the age of twenty-ſix he publiſhed his Ver-vert, a poem in four cantos, which commemorates

La cauſe infortunée
D'un Perroquet non moins brillant qu' Enée:
Non moins dévot, plus malheureux que lui.

Voltaire has ſpoken invidiouſly of this delightful performance; but a ſpirited French Critic has very juſtly vindicated the merits of Greſſet in the following remark:——Le Ver-vert ſera toujours un poeme charmant et inimitable, ſans ſouiller ſa plume par l'impiété et la licence qui deſhonorent celle de l'auteur de *La Pucelle*, le Poete a ſu y répandre un agrément, une fraîcheur et une vivacité de coloris, qui le rendent auſſi piquant dans les détails, qu'il eſt riche et ingénieux dans la fiction. On placera toujours cet agreable badinage parmi les productions originales, propres à faire aimer des etrangers la gaieté Françoiſe en écartant toute mauvaiſe idée de nos mœurs.

NOTE XVI. VERSE 325.

See lovely Boccage, in ambition ſtrong.] Madame du Boccage is known to the Engliſh reader as the correſpondent of Lord Cheſterfield. This ingenious and ſpirited Lady has written three poems of the Epic kind—Le Paradis Terreſtre, in ſix cantos, from Milton; La Mort d'Abel, in five cantos,

cantos, from Geſner; and a more original compoſition, in ten cantos, on the exploits of Columbus. I have alluded to a paſſage in the laſt poem, where Zama, the daughter of an Indian Chief, is thus deſcribed:

Comme Eve, elle etoit nue; une egale innocence
L'offre aux regards ſans honte, et voile ſes appas;
Les Graces qu'elle ignore accompagnent ſes pas,
Et pour tout vêtement, en formant ſa parure,
D'un plumage azuré couvrirent ſa ceinture.

The works of this elegant female Poet contain an animated verſion of Pope's Temple of Fame. And ſhe has added to her poetry an account of her travels through England, Holland, and Italy, in a ſeries of entertaining letters, addreſſed to Madame du Perron, her ſiſter.

NOTE XVII. VERSE 344.

To ſwell the glory of her great Voltaire.] Though the Henriade has been frequently reprinted, and the partizans of Voltaire have endeavoured to make it a national point of honour to ſupport its reputation, it ſeems at length to be ſinking under that neglect and oblivion, which never fail to overtake every feeble offspring of the Epic Muſe. Several of our moſt eminent Critics have attacked this performance with peculiar ſeverity, and ſome have condemned it on the moſt oppoſite principles, merely becauſe it does not coincide with their reſpective ſyſtems. Their ſentence has been paſſed only in ſhort and incidental remarks; but a French writer, inflamed by perſonal animoſity againſt Voltaire, has raiſed three octavo volumes on the defects of this ſingle poem. Mr. Clement, in his "*Entretiens ſur le Poeme Epique relativement à la Henriade,*" has endeavoured to prove it utterly deficient in all the eſſential points of Epic poetry;—in the ſtructure of its general plan, in the conduct of its various parts, in ſentiment, in character, in ſtyle. His work indeed diſplays an acrimonious deteſtation of the Poet whom he examines; and perhaps there is hardly any human compoſition which could ſupport the ſcrutiny of ſo rigid an inquiſitor: the Henriade is utterly unequal to it; for in many articles we are obliged to confeſs, that the juſtice of the Critic is not inferior to his ſeverity. He diſcovers, in his diſſection of the

Poem, the ſkill of an anatomiſt, with the malignity of an aſſaſſin. If any thing can deſerve ſuch rigorous treatment, it is certainly the artifice of Voltaire, who, in his Eſſay on Epic Poetry, has attempted, with much ingenuity, to ſink the reputation of all the great Epic Writers, that he might raiſe himſelf to their level; an attempt in which no author can ultimately ſucceed; for, as D'Alembert has admirably remarked on a different occaſion, Le public laiſſera l'amour propre de chaque ecrivain faire ſon plaidoyer, rira de leurs efforts, non de genie, mais de raiſonnement, pour hauſſer leur place, et finira par mettre chacun à la ſienne.

NOTE XVIII. VERSE 475.

And, ſhrouded in a miſt of moral ſpleen.] It ſeems to be the peculiar infelicity of Pope, that his moral virtues have had a tendency to diminiſh his poetical reputation. Poſſeſſing a benevolent ſpirit, and wiſhing to make the art, to which he devoted his life, as ſerviceable as he could to the great intereſts of mankind, he ſoon quitted the higher regions of poetry, for the more level, and more frequented field of Ethics and of Satire. He declares, with a noble pride ariſing from the probity of his intention,

> That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
> But ſtoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his ſong.

The ſeverity of Criticiſm has from hence inferred, that his imagination was inferior to the other faculties of his mind, and that he poſſeſſed not that vigour of genius which might enable him to rank with our more ſublime and pathetic Bards. This inference appears to me extremely defective both in candour and in reaſon; it would ſurely be more generous, and I will venture to add, more juſt, to aſſign very different cauſes for his having latterly applied himſelf to moral and ſatyric compoſition. If his preceding poems diſplayed only a moderate portion of fancy and of tenderneſs, we might indeed very fairly conjecture, that he quitted the kind of poetry, where theſe qualities are particularly required, becauſe Nature directed him to ſhine only as the Poet of reaſon.—But his earlier productions will authorize an oppoſite concluſion. At an age when few authors have produced any capital work, Pope gave the world two poems,

one

one the offspring of imagination, and the other of ſenſibility, which will ever ſtand at the head of the two poetical claſſes to which they belong: his Rape of the Lock, and his Eloiſe, have nothing to fear from any rivals, either of paſt or of future time. When a writer has diſplayed ſuch early proofs of exquiſite fancy, and of tender enthuſiaſm, thoſe great conſtituents of the real Poet, ought we not to regret that he did not give a greater ſcope and freer exerciſe to theſe qualities, rather than to aſſert that he did not poſſeſs them in a ſuperlative degree? Why then, it may be aſked, did he confine himſelf to compoſitions in which theſe have little ſhare? The life and character of Pope will perfectly explain the reaſons, why he did not always follow the higher ſuggeſtions of his own natural genius. He had entertained an opinion, that by ſtooping to truth, and employing his talents on the vices and follies of the paſſing time, he ſhould be moſt able to benefit mankind. The idea was perhaps ill-founded, but his conduct in conſequence of it was certainly noble. Its effects however were moſt unhappy; for it took from him all his enjoyment of life, and may injure, in ſome degree, his immortal reputation: by ſuffering his thoughts to dwell too much on knaves and fools, he fell into the ſplenetic deluſion, that the world is nothing but a compound of vice and folly; and from hence he has been reproached for ſuppoſing that all human merit was confined to himſelf, and to a few of his moſt intimate correſpondents.

There was an amiable peculiarity in the character of Pope, which had great influence both on his conduct and compoſition—he embraced the ſentiments of thoſe he loved with a kind of ſuperſtitious regard; his imagination and his judgment were perpetually the dupes of an affectionate heart: it was this which led him, at the requeſt of his idol Bolingbroke, to write a ſublime poem on metaphyſical ideas which he did not perfectly comprehend; it was this which urged him almoſt to quarrel with Mr. Allen, in compliance with the caprices of a female friend; it was this which induced him, in the warmth of gratitude, to follow the abſurd hints of Warburton with all the blindneſs of infatuated affection. Whoever examines the life and writings of Pope with a minute and unprejudiced attention, will find that his excellencies, both as a Poet and a Man, were peculiarly his own; and that his failings were chiefly owing to the ill judgment, or the artifice, of his real and pre-

tended

tended friends. The laviſh applauſe and the advice of his favourite Atterbury, was perhaps the cauſe of his preſerving the famous character of Addiſon, which, finely written as it is, all the lovers of Pope muſt wiſh him to have ſuppreſſed. Few of his friends had integrity or frankneſs ſufficient to perſuade him, that his ſatires would deſtroy the tranquillity of his life, and cloud the luſtre of his fame: yet, to the honour of Lyttelton, be it remembered, that he ſuggeſted ſuch ideas to the Poet, in the verſes which he wrote to him from Rome, with all the becoming zeal of enlightened friendſhip:

> No more let meaner Satire dim the rays
> That flow majeſtic from thy nobler bays!
> In all the flowery paths of Pindus ſtray,
> But ſhun that thorny, that unpleaſing way!
> Nor, when each ſoft, engaging Muſe is thine,
> Addreſs the leaſt attractive of the Nine!

This generous admonition did not indeed produce its intended effect, for other counſellors had given a different bias to the mind of the Poet, and the malignity of his enemies had exaſperated his temper; yet he afterwards turned his thoughts towards the compoſition of a national Epic poem, and poſſibly in conſequence of the hint which this Epiſtle of Lyttelton contains. The intention was formed too late, for it aroſe in his decline of life. Had he poſſeſſed health and leiſure to execute ſuch a work, I am perſuaded it would have proved a glorious acquiſition to the literature of our country: the ſubject indeed which he had choſen muſt be allowed to have an unpromiſing appearance; but the opinion of Addiſon concerning his Sylphs, which was ſurely honeſt, and not invidious, may teach us hardly ever to decide againſt the intended works of a ſuperior genius. Yet in all the Arts, we are perpetually tempted to pronounce ſuch deciſions. I have frequently condemned ſubjects which my friend Romney had ſelected for the pencil; but in the ſequel, my opinion only proved that I was near-ſighted in thoſe regions of imagination, where his keener eyes commanded all the proſpect.

NOTES

TO THE

FOURTH EPISTLE.

NOTE I. VERSE 103.

PROCEED, ye Siſters of the tuneful Shell.] For the advice which I have thus ventured to give ſuch of my fair readers as have a talent for poetry, I ſhall produce them a much higher poetical authority. In the age of Petrarch, an Italian Lady, named Giuſtina Perrot, was deſirous of diſtinguiſhing herſelf by this pleaſing accompliſhment; but the remarks of the world, which repreſented it as improper for her ſex, diſcouraged her ſo far, that ſhe was almoſt tempted to relinquiſh her favourite purſuit. In her doubts on this point, ſhe conſulted the celebrated Poet of her country in an elegant Sonnet; and received his anſwer on the intereſting ſubject in the ſame poetical form. I ſhall add the two Sonnets, with an imitation of each.

IO vorrei pur drizzar queſte mie piume
Colà, Signor, dove il deſio n'invita,
E dopo morte rimaner' in vita
Col chiaro di virtute inclyto lume
Ma' volgo inerte, che dal rio coſtume
Vinto, ha d' ogni ſuo ben la via ſmarrita,
Come degna di biaſmo ogn' hor m' addita
Ch' ir tenti d' Elicona al ſacro fiume.
All ago, al fuſo, piu ch' al lauro, o al mirto,
Come che qui non ſia la gloria mia,
Vuol ch' habbia ſempre queſta mente inteſa.
Dimmi tu hormai, che per piu dritta via
A Parnaſſo t' en vai, nobile ſpirto,
Dovrò dunque laſciar ſi degna impreſa?

LA gola, e 'l ſonno, e l' ozioſe piume
Hanno del mondo ogni virtù ſbandita,
Ond' è dal corſo ſuo quaſi ſmarrita
Noſtra natura vinta dal coſtume:
Ed è ſi ſpento ogni benigno lume
Del ciel, per cui s' informa umana vita,
Che per coſa mirabile s' addita
Chi vuol far d' Elicona naſcer fiume.
Qual vaghezza di lauro, qual di mirto?
Povera e nuda vai filoſofia,
Dice la turba al vil guadagno inteſa.
Pochi compagni avrai per l'altra via
Tanto ti prego più, gentile ſpirto,
Non laſciar la magnanima tua impreſa!

THE SONNET OF GIUSTINA TO PETRARCH.

GLADLY would I exchange inglorious eaſe
For future fame, the Poet's fond deſire!
And ſtill to live, in ſpite of death, aſpire
By Virtue's light, that darkneſs cannot ſeize:
But, ſtupified by Cuſtom's blank decrees,
The idle vulgar, void of liberal fire,
Bid me, with ſcorn, from Helicon retire,
And rudely blame my generous hope to pleaſe.
Diſtaffs, not laurels, to your ſex belong,
They cry—as honour were beyond our view:
To ſuch low cares they wiſh my ſpirit bent.
Say thou! who marcheſt, 'mid the favor'd few,
To high Parnaſſus, with triumphant ſong,
Should I abandon ſuch a fair intent?

THE ANSWER OF PETRARCH.

LUXURIOUS pleaſure, and lethargic eaſe
Have deaden'd in the world each bright deſire:
Our thoughts no more with Nature's force aſpire;
Cuſtom's cold powers the drooping fancy ſeize:
So loſt each light that taught the ſoul to pleaſe,
Each heavenly ſpark of life-directing fire,
That all, who join the Heliconian choir,
Are frantic deem'd by Folly's dull decrees.
What charms, what worth to Laurel-wreaths belong?
Naked and poor Philoſophy we view,
Exclaims the crowd, on ſordid gain intent.—
Aſſociates in thy path thou'lt find but few;
The more, I pray thee, Nymph of graceful ſong,
Indulge thy ſpirit in its noble bent!

NOTE II. VERSE 210.

As wounded Learning bluſhes to recite!] Milton ſold the copy of Paradiſe Loſt for the ſum of five pounds, on the condition of receiving fifteen pounds more at three ſubſequent periods, to be regulated by the ſale of the Poem.—For the ceiling at Whitehall, Rubens received three thouſand pounds.

NOTE III. VERSE 298.

Receive the Laurel from Imperial Charles!] Arioſto is ſaid to have been publicly crowned with laurel at Mantua, by the Emperor Charles the Vth, towards the end of the year 1532. This fact has been diſputed by various writers, but it ſeems to be ſufficiently eſtabliſhed by the reſearches of Mazzuchelli.

The cuſtom of crowning Poets with laurel is almoſt as ancient as poetry itſelf, ſays the Abbé du Reſnel, in his Recherches ſur les Poetes couronnez, a work which contains but ſcanty information on this curious topic. Petrarch is generally ſuppoſed to have revived this ancient ſolemnity, which had been aboliſhed as a pagan inſtitution in the reign of the Emperor Theodoſius. It appears however, from two paſſages in the writings of Boccacio, that Dante had entertained ſerious thoughts of this honourable diſtinction, which his exile precluded him from receiving, as he choſe, ſays his Biographer, to be crown'd only in his native city.

An amuſing volume might be written on the honours which have been paid to Poets in different ages, and in various parts of the world. It is remarkable, that the moſt unpoliſhed nations have been the moſt laviſh in rewarding their Bards. There are two inſtances on record, in which poetical talents have raiſed their poſſeſſors even to ſovereign dominion. The Scythians choſe the Poet Thamyris for their king, though he was not a native of their country, επι τοσουτον ηκε κιθαρωδιας, ως και βασιλεα σφων, καιπερ επηλυτον οντα, Σκυθας ποιησασθαι. Hiſt. Poet. Script. Edit. Gale, p. 250. Saxo Grammaticus begins the ſixth book of his Hiſtory by relating, that the Danes beſtowed their vacant diadem on the Poet Hiarnus, as a reward for his having compoſed the beſt epitaph on their deceaſed ſovereign Frotho. From the four Latin verſes which the Hiſtorian has given us, as a tranſlation

tranſlation of this extraordinary epitaph, we may venture to affirm, that the poetical monarch obtain'd his crown on very eaſy conditions.

NOTE IV. VERSE 314.

For him her fountains guſh with golden ſtreams.] Of the great wealth which flowed into the hands of this extraordinary Poet, his friend and biographer Montalvan has given a particular account. This author concludes that Lope de Vega gained by his dramatic works alone a ſum nearly equal to 20,000 pounds ſterling; the revenue ariſing from the poſts he held, and from his penſion, was very conſiderable. His opulence was much encreaſed by the moſt ſplendid inſtances of private liberality. He received many coſtly preſents from various characters to whom he was perſonally unknown; and he was himſelf heard to ſay, in ſpeaking of his generous patron, that the Duke of Seſſa alone had given him, at different periods of his life, ſums almoſt amounting to ſix thouſand pounds.

It muſt be confeſſed, that the noble patrons of Engliſh poetry have not equalled this example of Spaniſh munificence, even if we admit the truth of our traditionary anecdotes concerning the generoſity of Lord Southampton to Shakeſpeare, and of Sir Philip Sidney to Spenſer. Conſidering the liberality for which our nation is ſo juſtly celebrated, it is remarkable, that not a ſingle Engliſh Poet appears to have been enriched by our monarchs: yet Spenſer had every claim to the bounty of Elizabeth; he ſung her praiſes in a ſtrain which might gratify her pride; and of all who have flattered the great, he may juſtly be conſidered as the moſt worthy of reward. His ſong was the tribute of his heart as well as of his fancy, and the ſex of his idol may be ſaid to purify his incenſe from all the offenſive particles of ſervile adulation. The neglect which he experienced from the vain, imperious, and ungrateful Elizabeth, appears the more ſtriking, when we recollect, that her lovely rival, the beautiful and unfortunate Queen of Scots, ſignalized her ſuperior generoſity by a magnificent preſent of plate to the French Poet Ronſard. This neglected Bard was once the darling of France, and perhaps equalled Lope de Vega in the honours which he received: his ſovereign, Charles the Ninth, compoſed ſome elegant verſes in his praiſe, and the city of Toulouſe preſented him with a Minerva of maſſive ſilver.

If our princes and nobles have not equalled thoſe of other kingdoms in liberality to the great Poets of their country, England may yet boaſt the name of a private gentleman, who diſcovered in this reſpect a moſt princely ſpirit; no nation, either ancient or modern, can produce an example of munificence more truly noble than the annual gratuity which Akenſide received from Mr. Dyſon; a tribute of generous and affectionate admiration, endeared to its worthy poſſeſſor by every conſideration which could make it honourable both to himſelf and to his patron!

It has been lately lamented by an elegant and accompliſhed writer, who had too much reaſon for the complaint, that "the profeſſion "of Literature, by far the moſt laborious of any, leads to no real be-"nefit." Experience undoubtedly proves, that it has a general tendency to impoveriſh its votaries; and the legiſlators of every country would act perhaps a wiſe, at all events an honourable part, if they corrected this tendency, by eſtabliſhing public emoluments for ſuch as eminently diſtinguiſh themſelves in the various branches of ſcience. It is ſurely poſſible to form ſuch an eſtabliſhment, which, without proving a national burthen, might aggrandize the literary glory of the nation, by preſerving her men of letters from the evils ſo frequently connected with their purſuits, by ſecuring, to thoſe who deſerve it, the poſſeſſion of eaſe and honour, without damping their emulation, or deſtroying their independence.

NOTES
TO THE
FIFTH EPISTLE.

NOTE I. VERSE 76.

THE looſe Petronius gave the maxim birth.] Ariſtotle has ſaid but little, in his Poetics, concerning that weighty point, which has ſo much employed and embarraſſed the modern Critics—the machinery of the Epic poem; and the little which he has ſaid might rather furniſh an argument for its excluſion, than juſtify its uſe. But Rome, in her moſt degenerate days, produced a writer, to whoſe authority, contemptible as it is, moſt frequent appeals have been made in this curious literary queſtion. In almoſt every modern author who has touched, however ſlightly, on Epic poetry, we may find at leaſt ſome part of the following ſentence from Petronius Arbiter: — Ecce, belli civilis ingens opus quiſquis attigerit, niſi plenus litteris, ſub onere labetur. Non enim res geſtæ verſibus comprehendendæ ſunt, quod longe melius hiſtorici faciunt; ſed per ambages, deorumque miniſteria, & fabuloſum ſententiarum tormentum præcipitandus eſt liber ſpiritus; ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat, quam religioſæ orationis ſub teſtibus fides.

Theſe remarks on the neceſſity of celeſtial agents, were evidently made to depreciate the Pharſalia of Lucan; and Petronius may be called a fair Critic, as Pope ſaid of Milbourne, on his oppoſition to Dryden, becauſe he produces his own poetry in contraſt to that which he condemns. His ſpecimen of the manner in which he thought an Epic poem ſhould be conducted, ſufficiently proves the abſurdity of his criticiſm;

ticiſm; for how inſipid is the fable in thoſe verſes which he has oppoſed to the Pharſalia, when compared to the firſt book of Lucan! Yet the Epic compoſition of Petronius has not wanted admirers: a Dutch Commentator is bold enough to ſay, that he prefers this ſingle rhapſody to three hundred volumes of ſuch poetry as Lucan's: an opinion which can only lead us to exclaim with Boileau,

Un ſot trouve toujours un plus ſot qui l'admire.

If men of letters, in the age of Lucan, differed in their ſentiments concerning machinery, the great changes that have ſince happened in the world, and the diſquiſitions which have appeared on the ſubject, are very far from having reconciled the judgment of modern writers on this important article. Two eminent Critics of the preſent time have delivered opinions on this topic ſo ſingularly oppoſite to each other, that I ſhall tranſcribe them both.

"In a theatrical entertainment, which employs both the eye and the "ear, it would be a groſs abſurdity to introduce upon the ſtage ſuperior "Beings in a viſible ſhape. There is not place for ſuch objection in an "Epic poem; and Boileau, with many other Critics, declares ſtrongly "for that ſort of machinery in an Epic poem. But waving authority, "which is apt to impoſe upon the judgment, let us draw what light we "can from reaſon. I begin with a preliminary remark, that this mat-"ter is but indiſtinctly handled by Critics. The poetical privilege of "animating inſenſible objects for enlivening a deſcription, is very differ-"ent from what is termed *machinery*, where deities, angels, devils, or "other ſupernatural powers, are introduced as real perſonages, mixing "in the action, and contributing to the cataſtrophe; and yet theſe two "things are conſtantly jumbled together in the reaſoning. The former "is founded on a natural principle; but can the latter claim the ſame "authority? So far from it, that nothing is more unnatural. Its "effects at the ſame time are deplorable. Firſt, it gives an air of "fiction to the whole, and prevents that impreſſion of reality which is "requiſite to intereſt our affections, and to move our paſſions; which "of itſelf is ſufficient to explode machinery, whatever entertainment it "may afford to readers of a fantaſtic taſte or irregular imagination.

"And

" And next, were it poſſible, by diſguiſing the fiction, to delude us into " a notion of reality, which I think can hardly be, an inſuperable objec- " tion would ſtill remain, which is, that the aim or end of an Epic " poem can never be attained in any perfection where machinery is in- " troduced; for an evident reaſon, that virtuous emotions cannot be " raiſed ſucceſsfully, but by the actions of thoſe who are endued with " paſſions and affections like our own, that is, by human actions: and " as for moral inſtruction, it is clear that none can be drawn from " Beings who act not upon the ſame principles with us. Homer, it is " true, introduces the Gods into his fable; but the religion of his coun- " try authorized that liberty; it being an article in the Grecian creed, " that the Gods often interpoſe viſibly and bodily in human affairs. I " muſt, however, obſerve, that Homer's Deities do no honour to his " poems. Fictions that tranſgreſs the bounds of nature ſeldom have a " good effect; they may inflame the imagination for a moment, but " will not be reliſhed by any perſon of a correct taſte. They may be of " ſome uſe to the lower rank of writers; but an author of genius has " much finer materials of nature's production for elevating his ſubject, " and making it intereſting.——Voltaire, in his Eſſay upon Epic Poetry, " talking of the Pharſalia, obſerves judiciouſly, that the proximity of " time, the notoriety of events, the character of the age, enlightened and " political, joined with the ſolidity of Lucan's ſubject, deprived him of " all liberty of poetical fiction. Is it not amazing, that a Critic who " reaſons ſo juſtly with reſpect to others, can be ſo blind with reſpect to " himſelf? Voltaire, not ſatisfied to enrich his language with images " drawn from inviſible and ſuperior Beings, introduces them into the " action. In the ſixth canto of the Henriade, St. Louis appears in " perſon, and terrifies the ſoldiers; in the ſeventh canto, St. Louis " ſends the God of Sleep to Henry; and in the tenth, the demons of " Diſcord, Fanaticiſm, War, &c. aſſiſt Aumale in a ſingle combat with " Turenne, and are driven away by a good angel brandiſhing the ſword " of God. To blend ſuch fictitious perſonages in the ſame action with " mortals, makes a bad figure at any rate, and is intolerable in a hiſtory " ſo recent as that of Henry IV. This ſingly is ſufficient to make the " Henriade a ſhort-lived poem, were it otherwiſe poſſeſſed of every " beauty." *Elements of Criticiſm*, vol. ii. p. 389, 4th edition.

" The Pagan Gods and Gothic Fairies were equally out of credit when " Milton wrote. He did well therefore to ſupply their room with An- " gels and Devils. If theſe too ſhould wear out of the popular creed (and " they ſeem in a hopeful way, from the liberty ſome late Critics have " taken with them) I know not what other expedients the Epic Poet " might have recourſe to; but this I know—the pomp of verſe, the " energy of deſcription, and even the fineſt moral paintings, would ſtand " him in no ſtead. Without *admiration* (which cannot be effected but " by the marvellous of celeſtial intervention, I mean the agency of ſu- " perior natures really exiſting, or by the illuſion of the fancy taken to " be ſo) no Epic poem can be long-lived. I am not afraid to inſtance in " the Henriade itſelf, which, notwithſtanding the elegance of the com- " poſition, will in a ſhort time be no more read than the Gondibert of " Sir W. Davenant, and for the ſame reaſon."

Letters on Chivalry and Romance, Letter X.

I have thus ventured to confront theſe eminent critical antagoniſts, that, while they engage and overthrow each other, we may obſerve the injuſtice produced by the ſpirit of ſyſtematical criticiſm, even in authors moſt reſpectable for their talents and erudition.—Here is the unfortunate Voltaire placed between two critical fires, which equally deſtroy him. The *firſt* Critic aſſerts that the Henriade muſt be ſhort-lived, becauſe the Poet *has introduced inviſible and ſuperior agents*;—the *ſecond* denounces the ſame fate againſt it, becauſe *it wants* the *agency of ſuperior natures*: yet ſurely every reader of poetry, who is not influenced by any particular ſyſtem, will readily allow, that if Voltaire had treated his ſubject with true Epic ſpirit in all other points, neither the introduction nor the abſence of St. Louis could be ſingly ſufficient to plunge the Henriade in oblivion. Indeed the learned author, who has ſpoken in ſo peremptory a manner concerning the neceſſity of ſupernatural agents to preſerve the exiſtence of an Epic poem, appears rather unfortunate in the two examples by which he endeavours to ſupport his doctrine; for the Epic poems both of Davenant and Voltaire have ſufficient defects to account for any neglect which may be their lot, without conſidering the article of Machinery.

If I have warmly oppoſed any deciſions of this exalted Critic, it is from

from a perſuaſion (in which I may perhaps be miſtaken) that *ſome* of his maxims have a ſtrong tendency to injure an art highly dear to us both; an art on which his genius and learning have caſt *many* rays of pleaſing and of uſeful light.

NOTE II. VERSE 166.

But howling dogs the fancied Orpheus tore.] This anecdote of Neanthus, the ſon of King Pittacus, is related by Lucian. The curious reader may find it in the ſecond volume of Dr. Francklin's ſpirited tranſlation of that lively author, page 355 of the quarto edition.

NOTE III. VERSE 276.

And ſpotleſs Laurels in that field be won.] The Indian mythology, as it has lately been illuſtrated in the writings of Mr. Holwell, is finely calculated to anſwer the purpoſe of any poetical genius who may wiſh to introduce new machinery into the ſerious Epic Poem. Beſides the powerful charm of novelty, it would have the advantage of not claſhing with our national religion; for the endeavours of Mr. Holwell to reconcile the ancient and pure doctrine of Bramah with the diſpenſation of Chriſt, have ſo far ſucceeded, that if his ſyſtem does not ſatisfy a theologiſt, it certainly affords a ſufficient baſis for the ſtructure of a Poet. In peruſing his account of the Indian ſcripture, every reader of imagination may, I think, perceive, that the Shaſtah might ſupply a poetical ſpirit with as rich a maſs of ideal treaſure as fancy could wiſh to work upon.—An Epic Poet, deſirous of laying the ſcene of his action in India, would be more embarraſſed to find intereſting Heroes than proper Divinities.—Had juſtice and generoſity inſpired and guided that Engliſh valour, which has ſignalized itſelf on the plains of Indoſtan; had the arms of our country been employed to deliver the native Indians from the oppreſſive uſurpation of the Mahometan powers; ſuch exploits would preſent to the Epic Muſe a ſubject truly noble, and the mythology of the Eaſt might enrich it with the moſt ſplendid decorations. Whether it be poſſible or not to find ſuch a ſubject in the records of our Indian hiſtory, I leave the reader to determine.—Our great Hiſtorian of the Roman empire has intimated, in a note to the firſt volume of his immortal work, that "the wonderful expedition of Odin, which deduces

" the enmity of the Goths and Romans from ſo memorable a cauſe, might " ſupply the noble ground-work of an Epic poem." The idea is certainly both juſt and ſplendid. Had Gray been ever tempted to engage in ſuch a work, he would probably have convinced us, that the Northern mythology has ſtill ſufficient power to ſeize and enchant the imagination, as much in Epic as in Lyric compoſition.

It may amuſe our ſpeculative Critics, to conſider how far the *religious Gothic fables* ſhould be introduced or rejected, to render ſuch a performance moſt intereſting to a modern reader. Few judges would agree in their ſentiments on the queſtion; and perhaps the great diſpute concerning Machinery cannot be fairly adjuſted, till ſome happy genius ſhall poſſeſs ambition and perſeverance enough to execute two Epic poems, in the one adopting, and in the other rejecting, ſupernatural agents; for Reaſon alone is by no means an infallible conductor in the province of Fancy; and in the poetical as well as the philoſophical world, experiment is the ſureſt guide to truth.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

EPISTLE II.

Ver. 3, for *where* read *whence*
—— 282, for *Critic* read *Critics*

EPISTLE IV.

Ver. 356, for *keep* read *heap*.
Ver. 372, at the end of the line insert a mark of Interrogation.

ERRATA IN THE NOTES.

Page 133, line 3, for *were* read *bore*
—— 181, — 10, for *Ninus* read *Nisus*
—— 201, — 8, for *neglio* read *meglio* — for *gindicio* read *giudicio*
—— 208, — 28, for *Arauco* read *Arauco*; and line ult. for *Arancanians* read *Araucanians*
—— 217, &c. for *Lincoza* read *Linceya*
—— 223, line 20, for *Lantaro* read *Lautaro*.—The Reader is desired to correct this name in different pages, as it is repeatedly misprinted.
—— 286, line 2, for *was* read *were*